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MICHELLE LANGFORD



ALLEGORICAL IMAGES

TABLEAU, TIME AND GESTURE IN THE CINEMA OF
WERNER SCHROETER

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By Michelle Langford

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Contents

Introduction	7
<i>Allegorical Images: Tableau, Time and Gesture in the Cinema of Werner Schroeter</i>	
1 A Cinema on the Margins: Contextualizing the Films of Werner Schroeter	17
2 Towards a Theory of Cinematic Allegory	53
3 The Allegorical Tableau	89
4 Allegorical Montage	115
5 A Gestural Cinema: Allegorical Figures and Faulty Performances	133
6 Brecht and Beyond: From Social to Allegorical Gestus	169
Werner Schroeter Filmography	193
Bibliography	197
Index	211

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And, finally, I dedicate this book to my grandmother, Heather J. Stoltenberg.

Introduction

Allegorical Images: Tableau, Time and Gesture in the Cinema of Werner Schroeter



Isabel Huppert in *Malina*, 1990. Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin – Deutsche Kinemathek © Werner Schroeter

In Werner Schroeter's 1990 film *Malina*, based on the Ingeborg Bachmann novel of the same name, the French actress Isabelle Huppert plays a writer who is marked by a series of inabilities. She is unable to write, unable to communicate, unable to remember her father, unable to act and interact properly within her environment, or to engage fully with others in that environment. The world, both her external milieu and her internal mindscape, have become the loci of impossible relations between sensations

and reactions, thoughts and actions, signs and meanings. This is borne out manifestly in her gestural sphere, in the nervous energy that interrupts everything she attempts to do, in the apparent breakdown of her sensory-motor coordination.¹ She rushes from one end of her apartment to the other, weaving in and out of rooms for no apparent reason: stopping suddenly, turning, stopping, turning, collapsing onto the floor. She composes letters, or dictates them to her secretary, but never sends them off. She simply shoves them into a draw instead, or else into the trash. At one point she even tells the postman to stop delivering her mail. Each time she attempts to cross the road, a car screeches to a halt, or a tram rushes by bringing her within centimetres of her life. At times she even has to remind

herself to breathe: "Ich muß atmen, Ich muß atmen,"² she repeats to herself. This motor incapacity manifests itself also on a filmic level: partly through the fragmented and non-sequential development and continual deferment of narrative progression and the use of 'irrational' editing, but not least for the way Huppert's body is separated from its own voice and breath. Huppert is effectively deprived of her ability to speak. The particularities of her own vocal inflections that would normally work in harmony with the facial and gestural expressions of the body have been erased and replaced with a rather deadpan post-dubbed voice.³ However, this 'voice-over' does not function as a disembodied voice-over narration in the conventional sense, for it is still closely (but not quite) synchronized to Huppert's on-screen body. This voice emanates from elsewhere and attaches itself to her body, or rather to the body of her character, who does not even have a name.⁴ The film does not attempt to replicate the first-person narration – the 'Ich' – of Bachmann's novel, but rather constitutes her character as a kind of dislocated subject, whose sensory-motor system has been disabled: sensations are not immediately transformed into actions, and, when they are, they remain fragmentary, dispersed, forgetful.

Confronted with the cinema of Werner Schroeter, I, too, am faced with a certain sensory-motor helplessness. Upon viewing Schroeter's films, although I am deeply moved, I am frequently deprived of my ability to speak. Words fail me. I find it impossible to speak of Schroeter's films, to describe them or to draw meaning from them immediately, but then, perhaps, I am not supposed to. The images and sounds of Schroeter's films generate a cacophony of affects through his use of intensely rich colours (particularly reds); music that swells so seductively that the viewer is encouraged to listen with her entire body, or else her lips are coaxed to sing along. Gestures and gazes generate such a mixture of pathos, pleasure, disgust, pain or laughter that diverse emotions may no longer be easily distinguished from one another. Schroeter's films address the spectator not so much intellectually as somatically and, in the process, momentarily cut off our ability to 'read' his images. To some extent, it is this somatic address, which is able to momentarily hold us and carry us along in the film's rhythm, to take over our senses and render us speechless. Rather than voyeuristic pleasure, Schroeter's films produce what Vivian Sobchack might call "cinesthetic pleasure",⁵ or what I wish to call a kind of "haptic fascination". This is a kind of fascination that does not 'hold' the spectator in the classical sense implied by the notion of suture. Rather, it is a fascination that invokes the 'haptic' as a kind of 'pure touching'. Schroeter's films 'touch' the spectator in such a way that turns them into allegorists, causes them to adopt new ways of seeing. His films destroy our capacity to 'read' cinematic images in conventional ways, but create new ways of engaging with film images. No longer do images, sounds, gestures have a 'logical' relationship to meaning, for they have been 'torn' (sometimes violently) from the contexts and processes that may originally have produced them. Schroeter's cinema is allegorical in the most complex sense of the term, where allegory comprises not simply the content of the films (the story or characters), but their very substance, their mode of expression and their mode of address, which in turn deeply inflects the way we receive and respond to them.

That Schroeter works in such an allegorical mode presents a problem not least for the viewer experiencing them for the first time, but also for the film critic and theorist. One is never quite sure what to say about such films that do not appear to subscribe to most of the cinematic conventions we are familiar with, nor does one feel adequately equipped to theorize them, for no existing paradigm of film theory seems to 'work'. I sift through the stores of knowledge I have acquired through reading various film histories, theories and criticisms, watching films and writing on them. But none of these seem to mediate adequately between my experience of Schroeter's films, and the act of writing about them. The paths from perception to thought, and thought to discourse are continually being interrupted, intercepted. Schroeter's films constantly lead me astray.

Schroeter's films do not subscribe to many of the codes and conventions by which narrative films usually make meaning. His narratives are fragmentary and elliptical and characters are not developed into psychologically complex individuals, but remain figures or types: fragments. These figures tend to quote or describe their parts, rather than enacting them. Action is continually being arrested by the refrain of the constant pause. This inhibits the movement of the films, which is driven more by rhythm than by action and deposits narrative into a series of autonomous tableaux. Gestures, postures and poses swell up with the residues and excesses of actions that cannot be fully performed. These gestures are the surplus of movements and narratives that cannot take place, or have perhaps already taken place. Furthermore, montage does not serve to smooth over the fragmenting processes of film, but rather enhances them, makes them more visible.

In fact, as early as 1974, the German film critic Ekkehard Pluta stated the problem most succinctly:

The dilemma of the reception of Schroeter's films lies in the following: In order to understand the dialectical effect of image and sound in Schroeter's films, one must analyse them carefully at an editing table. But then the pleasure, which they are intended to produce, will surely be lost. From the impossibility of untangling the complex system of optical and acoustic signs, with all their intertwined layers, results the often impressionistic and emotional views of the film critic.⁶

Pluta's dilemma is not so different from my own, for Schroeter's films challenge us to seek out an appropriate conceptual language through which to interpret them without, however, destroying the great pleasure and mesmerizing rhythms that these moving images produce in the viewing, feeling subject. Pluta is quite obviously marking the inadequacy of certain methods of film analysis that had become prevalent in film studies in the 1970s, namely the structural analysis of film narrative pioneered by such figures as Raymond Bellour. Pluta laments that at that time there was really no precise film-theoretical language to account either for the dialectical effect of Schroeter's complex montage of sound and image, nor for the unravelling of the many interconnected layers out of which Schroeter's films are composed. In fact, the title of Pluta's article, "Das denaturierte

Gesamtkunstwerk" (literally "the denatured total work of art"), hints at the way Schroeter's films defy all attempts at classification. The term "*denaturierte*" refers to that which has been rendered no longer capable of fulfilling its usual function, or whose properties or nature have been changed irrevocably such as through the addition of methyl to alcohol, which renders it undrinkable (as in methylated spirits). The *Gesamtkunstwerk*, epitomized by the operas of Richard Wagner, embodies the concept of a 'total' work of art whose parts are wholly integrated, working in a single, synchronous union and therefore cannot be separated. Pluta suggests, therefore, that while Schroeter's films consist of many parts working together, under his direction, the nature of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* has been irrevocably altered: tainted. Rather than bringing together all parts in harmony, Schroeter's films consist of diverse fragments that rub against one another, causing friction and announcing the very nature of their construction. This, as I shall demonstrate in chapter two, is one of the fundamental aspects of the allegorical mode of expression as it has been theorized by Walter Benjamin, and I believe that it is through such a theory that we may begin to find a conceptual language appropriate to these complex and challenging films.

The films of Werner Schroeter present a problem for the spectator/critic/theorist because they resist automatic or habitual responses developed either by watching other films, or through the various theoretical discourses that have taught us how to read films in general. Just as you think you have grasped them, understood them, the meanings you thought you saw emerge from them seem to slip through your fingers. Those meanings are then replaced by new meanings. Sometimes conflicting meanings pile up on top of one another and begin to coexist, making it impossible to decide upon any final meaning at all.

The task of writing about Schroeter's films is particularly difficult, but also very challenging. It is this difficulty that has largely been responsible for relegating Schroeter's films to the margins of film history, theory and criticism. The challenge lies in discovering a mode of discourse appropriate to the films, a mode of discourse that might be capable of apprehending some of the dispersive elements; namely those of tableau, time and gesture, which are central to Schroeter's cinema. I intend to take up such a challenge in this book.

I do not intend this book to be a complete historical, thematic or stylistic survey of Schroeter's films, but will begin by opening a historical, critical and theoretical space in which a discussion of his cinema may become possible. In chapter one, "A Cinema on the Margins: Contextualising the films of Werner Schroeter", I will begin by introducing the reader to Schroeter's oeuvre, to the thematic and stylistic characteristics of his films, and I will divide them into three historical periods. I will then proceed to account for Schroeter's marginality by situating his practice in the broader context of the New German Cinema. I will show how, and suggest reasons why, Schroeter has been an important yet marginal force in the New German Cinema, its histories and its theories.

In chapter two, “Towards a Theory of Cinematic Allegory”, I will lay down the theoretical groundwork for engaging with Schroeter’s cinema. This will facilitate the overall aim of this book, which is to conduct an exploration into the kinds of ‘images’ produced by Schroeter’s cinema and to locate the conceptual forces at work within those images.

An explication of my title would perhaps be appropriate at this point. The term ‘image’ in the title ‘Allegorical Images’ does not refer merely to the visible field of representation: the photographic element of the cinematographic image. It bears the imprint of a form of conceptual montage: a montage of ideas, which is to be played out in this book. My use of the term ‘image’ here, comes via Gilles Deleuze’s two volumes on the cinema where he uses it to denote the various kinds of cinematographic concepts that the cinema gives rise to: movement-images, perception-images, affection-images, action-images, time-images, etc.⁷ Deleuze explains: “What we call cinematographic concepts are...the types of images and the signs which correspond to each type.”⁸ Schroeter’s cinema, as I will argue throughout this book, gives rise to a particular type of time-image that I propose to call ‘allegorical’. This term forms the second part of my conceptual montage and refers specifically to the theory of allegory put forth by Walter Benjamin in his work on the baroque, *Traverspiel*, of the seventeenth century, and the work of the nineteenth-century French poet Charles Baudelaire. In his work on the latter, Benjamin aligns the destructive, fragmenting impulse of allegory with the reproductive technologies of film and its capacity for montage. But this is perhaps only the most obvious connection that can be made between allegory and film in general. It is, rather, through the category of time that allegory becomes most pertinent to contemporary cinema and, therefore, may also be brought into contact with Deleuze’s notion of the time-image.

The time-image, according to Deleuze, manifests itself at a time (around the end of the Second World War) when the classical cinema, or what Deleuze calls the cinema of the movement-image, undergoes a crisis. This crisis besets the sensory-motor operations fundamental to the movement-image. This results in time being dislodged from its dependence upon movement and comes to be presented directly in the image. According to Deleuze, in the new cinema, time ceases to be presented chronologically, but emerges as the simultaneity of various pasts and presents. Time and memory take on a new function. Similarly, central to Benjamin’s theory of allegory is the idea of the coexistence of diverse temporalities. The simultaneous coexistence of the fleeting and the eternal is captured in Benjamin’s dialectical image of “petrified unrest”.⁹ Allegory, too, displaces the sensory connections in language that facilitate movement from word or image to meaning, effectively emptying traditional meanings from a word or image so as to fill it with new meaning.

In chapter two, therefore, I will bring some aspects of Benjamin’s theorization of allegory into productive contact with Deleuze’s conception of the time-image. Just as allegory emerges at times of social and political crisis,¹⁰ so, too, the time-image emerged following a time of protracted war: the Second World War. It is not

surprising, therefore, that there have been many examples of allegorical cinema emerge in the second half of the twentieth century in response not only to war, but to contexts of social, political and sexual repression, dictatorships, censorship, in response to the postcolonial condition, and in such places as Iran following the Islamicization of the film industry in the post-revolutionary period. While Schroeter's films may be seen as part of this wider allegorical turn, they must also be seen for the unique way that they are not simply direct responses to difficult or repressive conditions, but represent a more general meta-filmic assault upon cinematic conventions. The following four chapters will, therefore, be dedicated to unravelling some of the many allegorical layers of his films and discussing the very unique kinds of allegorical images they produce.

In chapter three, "The Allegorical Tableau", I will discuss the most fundamental characteristic of Schroeter's allegorical practice. Although Schroeter's cinema remains to some extent a narrative one, his films do not unfold according to the conventions and devices that are the hallmark of classical narrative cinema, devices which ensure spatial and temporal continuity. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in his use of space, which is not articulated as 'narrative space' in a classical sense, but in a rather fragmentary way as 'tableau space.' In many of his earlier films, the tableau can usually be equated with a more or less static shot, while in his later fictional films these tableaux are created by much more complex means and often involve multiple shots. The stasis of the tableau effectively puts a hold on movement and allows time-images to emerge. The tableau constitutes an autonomous spatio-temporal fragment, which does not form part of a continuous sequence in time, but rather contains various times of its own. Often, it is through the gestural performances, poses and postures of Schroeter's actors, that these tableau images come into effect. These images are time-images, and they are frequently multi-layered and capable of sustaining diverse temporalities. It is this that marks them as allegorical images.

In chapter four "Allegorical Montage", I will discuss Schroeter's use of montage. I will argue that like his articulation of space, Schroeter's use of montage is similarly allegorical. Allegorical montage will be defined by the status of the fragment and the emphasis on the cut, over which meaning may travel but not without a degree of deferment or dispersal. I will differentiate Schroeter's use of montage from both classical continuity, or 'organic montage', and Eisenstein's notion of 'dialectical montage', before likening it to Alexander Kluge's theory of montage, which also places the emphasis on the cut or interval between images. It is in this interval that Kluge hopes to activate the spectator's own imagination. Kluge's theories will then be brought to bear upon Deleuze's discussion of the new kind of montage appropriate to the cinema of the time-image, which also involves a more active role for the spectator. I will argue that Schroeter's allegorical cinema introduces the spectator to 'allegorical ways of seeing' – that is, ways of seeing or a kind of spectatorship in which the spectator's own capacity to make connections is activated. This ability is not unlike Proust's notion of 'involuntary memory', which is a crucial element in Benjamin's work on modernity. Along with montage, image repetition and circular narratives are used

by Schroeter to activate this kind of memory in the spectator's mind, which according to Benjamin, is more like forgetting than remembering. Such repetition, which is frequently not repetition of the same but similar images, also functions as what I call the films' own form of forgetful remembering.

In chapter five, "A Gestural Cinema: Allegorical Figures and Faulty Performances", I will again turn to this notion of forgetful remembering as it applies to the gestural sphere of Schroeter's films. Gesture is one of the most important elements of Schroeter's cinema. Not only do gestures have a powerful effect over the articulation of space in his films, but they also work as a function of the dual processes of remembering and forgetting, and are, therefore, temporal in themselves. In his films, Schroeter picks up the lost and forgotten gestures of western culture and finds a use for them. Schroeter's performers often quote gestures, tearing them from their usual contexts. In the process, these performers do not simply portray characters, but become allegorical figures, figures that function as "expressive statuary", and embody the dialectical temporality of allegory. I shall concentrate on how the numerous allegorical figures in Schroeter's films are constructed and deconstructed through gesture. These figures, who include divas, prostitutes, martyrs and melancholics, correspond to many of the allegorical figures that Benjamin identifies in both baroque and nineteenth-century allegory. While in the baroque age, such stereotypes as the martyr and the melancholic were the idealized and sacred subjects of divine redemption; in the modern era such figures are replaced by the likes of the prostitute, who is the very embodiment of commodification. Schroeter works his allegorical gaze upon these figures in order to shatter their illusory totality and, in doing so, manages to extract what Deleuze would call an "image" from the cliché.

No discussion of gesture in contemporary German cinema could proceed without acknowledgment of the work of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht. It is therefore to his notion of *Gestus*¹¹ that I shall turn in my sixth and final chapter, "Brecht and Beyond: From Social to Allegorical *Gestus*". Although I do not consider Schroeter to be a Brechtian film-maker, I believe that through Deleuze's reinterpretation of *Gestus* in terms of the time-image, a kind of 'allegorical *Gestus*' emerges through the many performing bodies encountered in Schroeter's films. Through the use of gesture and various cinematic devices such as framing, montage and camera movement, the performing bodies in Schroeter's films are developed into temporal forms capable of sustaining various modes of temporal experience. This will be illustrated with particular reference to the work of two performers who appear in Schroeter's 1980 film *La répétition générale*: Pina Bausch, along with her dancers from the Wuppertal Tanztheater, and the Japanese butoh performer Kazuo Ohno, as well as through examples drawn from some of Schroeter's other films.

As I mentioned in my opening, an implicit concern that underlies this book is the problem of finding a methodology appropriate to beautiful but bewildering films. While I do not intend to dwell upon this point self-reflexively, I do intend this book itself to offer one response to such a question. Much of the difficulty lies in the centrality of gesture to Schroeter's cinema.

Gesture, by the force of its very ephemerality, has largely escaped the dominant modes of film theory and criticism. Gesture constitutes an element that has been left out of or forgotten by such discourses. In their introduction to *Falling for You: Essays on Cinema and Performance*, the editors Lesley Stern and George Kouvaros argue that the lack of attention to cinematic performance in the major film theories is due largely to the methodological question of description and to the “decided rejection of the descriptive” in post-1970s Anglo Saxon scholarship.¹² They argue for the development of new modes of film writing. They write:

If we are concerned not simply with how films communicate with audiences, but with how theoretical and analytic writings communicate with readers who are also film viewers, then we would stress that they are constituted to some extent as film viewers by the very act of writing/reading. Ideally we would like to write in such a way as to bring the film into imaginative being for the reader, so that she views it in the process of reading. In reading she becomes a film viewer. But we would also like to offer a persuasive interpretation based on attentiveness to the object, on detailed and accurate rendition.¹³

In my discussion of tableau, time and gesture in the cinema of Werner Schroeter, I will also attempt to remain faithful to these aims. At the same time, I will remain aware that description cannot always be entirely faithful to its object: it is prone to bouts of forgetfulness. But such forgetfulness can itself be productive. It can open the viewer, and perhaps also the reader to the possibility of involuntary memory, and also perhaps to a different experience of time than the linear time offered to us by the so-called classical narrative cinema.

The pairing of Walter Benjamin and Gilles Deleuze in this book is, therefore, not accidental. Not only do both take up the notion of non-chronological time through Henri Bergson’s writings on movement, time and memory, both authors value the image as a necessary and vital aspect of thought.¹⁴ Benjamin and Deleuze both engage in a form of thinking in images, and these images give rise to concepts. For Benjamin, these are dialectical images, through which points of contact between past and present may be made, and with which he conceives of a new way of encountering history and of making history present.¹⁵ For Deleuze, in his work on cinema, these images are cinematographic, and he is concerned with the way cinema produces concepts, which is also, for Deleuze, the primary aim of philosophy.¹⁶ I believe that both Benjamin and Deleuze, although Benjamin rather belatedly, open up paths into the cinema which have not previously been explored by the dominant strands in film theory, particularly those that emerged during the 1970s in Britain and the United States and, which, by the late 1980s had certainly seemed to reach an impasse.¹⁷ In the whirlpool of debates surrounding ‘postmodernism’ and under the all too imposing discourse of ‘cultural studies’, discourses on the cinema seemed to lose their specificity. Deleuze’s work on cinema offers a way around this impasse, particularly because he helps us to think through aspects of cinema such as movement, light, colour, gesture, sound and time, which may not be entirely grasped along the lines of theme, style, technique or narrativity.

This, I believe, is an appropriate way of approaching Schroeter's cinema, for his is a cinema which not only hinges upon the deployment of excess, but, like the central unnamed figure in *Malina*, is not entirely in control its sensory-motor schema.

This impacts upon the way we write about such films. The breakdown of the sensory-motor schema, brought on by films such as Schroeter's, disable our capacity to react to them habitually or automatically, and, therefore, impede our attempts to write about them immediately. Each new image brings with it the need to invent new ways of reading cinematic images. Each time we are confronted with a new image, it is as though we are beginning again for the first time. This book represents just a few such beginnings, which, while they are not the first, do certainly not proclaim to be the final word on the cinema of Werner Schroeter, whose work has been largely overlooked in English-language film theory. It is my hope that this book will encourage more scholars to look seriously at his work and to engage in their own descriptive and interpretive acts. I also hope to provide my reader with an introduction to a way of conceptualising a mode of allegory that is particularly cinematic, and that this should reinvigorate and enliven debates around allegorical cinema more generally.

Notes

1. In other words, Huppert's character is beset by a breakdown in her sensory-motor schema, the physiological schema, which coordinates the delivery and dispatch of messages between the brain and the sensory organs and muscles of the body. This is a term borrowed by Gilles Deleuze from the science of neuro-physiology to describe a similar kind of breakdown that he identifies in the post-World War II cinema. It is upon this notion of the breakdown of the cinema's sensory-motor schema that his concept of the 'time-image' depends. I will discuss the importance of Deleuze's work to this book shortly with reference to his two books on cinema: Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans., Hugh Tomlinson & Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans., Hugh Tomlinson & Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). Henceforth, I will refer to these texts as *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2* respectively.
2. "I must breathe, I must breathe."
3. I am referring to the German version of the film. The overdubbing of Huppert's voice arose largely out of the fact that she does not speak German. This point would perhaps be inconsequential, but Schroeter works with the de-synchronization of body and voice throughout his oeuvre.
4. The novel is written entirely in the first person, and the character is never named. In much of the literature on Bachmann's novel, she is referred to simply as 'Ich,' (I).
5. Vivian Sobchack "What My Fingers Knew: The Cinesthetic Subject, or Vision in the Flesh" www.sensesofcinema.com v.5, (2000).
6. Ekkehard Pluta, "Das denaturierte Gesamtkunstwerk" *Medium*, n. 10, (October, 1974), 12.
7. These terms will be explained in more detail throughout this book.
8. *Cinema 1*, ix.
9. Benjamin's notion of the 'dialectical image', which I will explain in more detail in chapter 2, is deployed by him largely as a way of bringing the past into contact with the present, and is, therefore, a temporal mode of thought.
10. Susan Buck-Morss *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: MIT Press, 1989). Buck-Morss writes: "allegory was a mode of perception peculiar to a time of social disruption and protracted war when human

suffering and material ruin were the stuff and substance of historical experience – hence the return of allegory in [Benjamin’s] own era as a response to the horrifying destructiveness of World War I. 178.

11. This term, which refers not to gestures as such, but rather to the attitudes that surround certain gestures, will be defined in greater detail in chapter 4.
12. Lesley Stern & George Kouvaros, eds., *Falling for You: Essays on Cinema and Performance* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1999), 8.
13. *Ibid.*, 9.
14. There would, of course, be points at which their respective interpretations of Bergson diverge, but I do not intend to take up this matter in my book.
15. See especially “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” *Illuminations*, trans., Harry Zohn (London: Fontana Press, 1992).
16. See Tomlinson & Habberjam, “Translator’s Introduction,” *Cinema 1*, xi-xiii. They write, “Thus Deleuze is engaged in the work of concept creation ‘alongside’ the cinema. New concepts are invented, on the basis of some well-known philosophical themes, and then put to work in the cinema.” ix.
17. I am thinking particularly of structuralist, feminist and psychoanalytically inspired film theory of the 1970s, which all engaged in critiquing the so-called ‘classical cinema’ and the cinematic apparatus as an ideological system which binds the spectator into the illusory ideals of capitalism, with its neatly defined divisions of labour, sexuality and normalcy.

Chapter One

A Cinema on the Margins: Contextualizing the films of Werner Schroeter

Thomas Elsaesser once described Werner Schroeter as “the German cinema’s greatest marginal filmmaker.”¹ Indeed, beginning his film-making career in the 1960s, Schroeter has been an important and influential proponent of the New German Cinema, although his personal eccentricities and refusal to use conventional narrative tools in his films have rendered his work somewhat obscure and less marketable than some of his more famous contemporaries, such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Wim Wenders, Werner Herzog and Volker Schlöndorff. In 1979, Schroeter’s close friend and colleague, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, speculated upon the place Schroeter and his films might some day hold for the history of cinema:

Werner Schroeter will one day have a place in the history of film that I would describe in literature as somewhere between Novalis, Lautréamont, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline; he was an ‘underground’ director for ten years, and they didn’t want to let him slip out of this role. Werner Schroeter’s grand cinematic scheme of the world was confined, repressed, and at the same time ruthlessly exploited. His films were given the convenient label of ‘underground’, which transforms them in a flash into beautiful but exotic plants that bloomed so unusually and so far away that basically one couldn’t be bothered with them, and therefore wasn’t supposed to bother with them. And that’s precisely as wrong as it is stupid. For Werner Schroeter’s films are not far away; they’re beautiful but not exotic. On the contrary.²

Werner Schroeter and the New German Cinema

Despite having had a long and prestigious film-making career, with many awards to his credit, Werner Schroeter and his films maintain a somewhat precarious position in relation to the many institutions that define the national cinema and the cinema culture of the Federal Republic of Germany. Schroeter’s place in relation to those institutions remains difficult to define. Unlike his numerous colleagues in the

New German Cinema such as Fassbinder, Schlöndorff, Wenders, and Herzog among others, who have become the international representatives of German Cinema, Schroeter remains largely unknown outside of Germany and France. Although his films tour widely on the international festival circuit, they rarely receive theatrical release outside of Europe. The reasons for this are numerous, stemming from, on the one hand, Schroeter's early failure (or downright refusal) to take full advantage of the funding mechanisms available to German film-makers and on the other, the aesthetic and conceptual difficulty posed by his films to film critics, historians and theorists, thereby relegating his films to the very margins of those discourses. The general lack of critical and theoretical attention to his films, particularly in English, has led to a certain invisibility of Schroeter and his work outside of the European continent as well as in the annals of film history. Timothy Corrigan has aptly situated Schroeter's cinematic practice on what he calls "the edge of history", the history of the New German Cinema. He writes:

Even after *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* won the prestigious Golden Bear at the 1980 Berlin Film Festival, Schroeter and his films have remained barely on the visible fringes of the cinematic family and historical movement which he, in many ways, helped to deliver...Schroeter would seem to have chosen another, a different course in time...³

In terms of film history, Schroeter is something of a straggler, a *Nachzügler*, as Walter Benjamin might say, an allegorical figure who works against the grain of time and society. Not only does it seem that he has chosen another 'course' in time, but often he seems to work against time, at a different pace to many of his contemporaries such as Fassbinder, Wenders or Herzog. This makes Schroeter's work difficult to place historically, culturally and theoretically, despite its aesthetic richness, and few to date have taken up the challenge to engage at length and in depth with his rather challenging and complex films.

Searching the pages of the major books on the New German Cinema in English, French and German for Schroeter will yield disappointing results; fleeting and rather superficial citations that prove little more than that his films exist. In 1979, a directory of German film-makers listed Schroeter as having "no fixed abode."⁴ In an interview, Schroeter confirmed his itinerant status. In his reply to the question "at the moment you are living out of a suitcase?" Schroeter responds: "I have a cassette deck, a few shirts and a jacket, four or five books...I mostly live with friends. When I am working I move from hotel to hotel...I am someone who will not submit to any constraints whatsoever. Sometimes I work for three days straight and then sleep all day long. That is not a life that could form part of a normal household."⁵ Indeed, to this day, Schroeter lives a rather itinerant life, between various cities in Germany and with frequent visits to France determined largely by the numerous theatrical and operatic productions he directs each year, forming temporary families with his cast members before moving on.⁶ Similarly, he has never been fully integrated into the New German Cinema family, preferring instead to come and go as he pleases, refusing to submit to constraints.

In this chapter I shall sketch out the tenuous relationship Schroeter has had with the New German Cinema and I will posit some of the reasons why his films have remained so marginal, yet are some of the richest and most original films to have emerged from Germany in the latter part of the twentieth century, but first I should like to give my reader a broad overview of Schroeter's films.

Schroeter's Oeuvre

Born at the very end of the Second World War in Germany, Werner Schroeter spent most of his childhood between Bielfeld and Heidelberg. His education was interrupted intermittently by periods of international travel during which time he occasionally attended German schools in foreign countries, finally completing his high school education in Heidelberg. One can imagine that these periods of international travel may have inspired the many foreign locations he later chose for his films: Naples and Palermo in Italy; Paris, Nancy, Arles and Marseille in France; Mexico; Portugal; Lebanon; the Philippines; and the Mojave Desert in the USA. His command of foreign languages – French, English, Italian, along with some Spanish and Portuguese – might well have been made possible less through his education than by his childhood travels of the world. After leaving school, Schroeter enrolled at the University of Mannheim to study psychology, but completed only three semesters. After abandoning his university studies, Schroeter worked intermittently as a freelance journalist before enrolling at the Film and Television School in Munich where he remained for only a few weeks.

In late 1967, after having begun to make short experimental 8mm films, Schroeter attended the experimental film festival in Knokke, Belgium, where he no doubt would have seen a number of films of the New York Underground, exposing him not only to the numerous aesthetic possibilities of experimental cinema, but to the possibilities of independent film production free from the institutional constraints of the commercial film industry. It was in Knokke that Schroeter also became acquainted with another German experimental film-maker, Rosa von Praunheim, with whom he worked in various capacities on a number of films. Schroeter and von Praunheim co-directed *Grotesk-Burlesk-Pittoresk* (1968) and Schroeter acted in von Praunheim's short film *Sisters of the Revolution* (1969). In 1968 Schroeter acquired a 16mm camera with which he made his first feature-length film, *Eika Katappa* (1969), a film that won him the Josef von Sternberg prize at the Mannheim International Film Festival and effectively launched his film-making career by attracting the attention of German television, which was to become a major source of funding for many of his films. In the early 1970s, Schroeter began to pursue his other passions in theatre and opera and has ever since maintained prolific parallel careers as director of film, theatre and opera.⁷

Aesthetically and structurally, Schroeter's films can be divided into three historical phases, which also coincide roughly with changes in format from 8mm to 16mm and then to 35mm. The first phase comprises the 8mm films all made between 1967 and 1968. Schroeter's concerns and cinematic techniques during this first phase are largely minimal and experimental. A series of 8mm films dedicated to the opera

singer Maria Callas, an artist whom Schroeter greatly loved and admired, consist largely of still photographs of the singer. In these films, Schroeter displays a fascination for Callas' face and her gestures through a rhythmic montage of still photographic images. At one point in *Callas Walking Lucia*, Schroeter rapidly montages a series of photographs of Callas as Lucia in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* in order to animate her dramatic cry. Even in these rather crudely and primitively constructed films, Schroeter displays a deep interest in opera, performance and gesture. Schroeter will return to these interests throughout his career, and Callas' voice will continue to haunt his films. Schroeter's first few 16mm films, *Aggressionen*, *Neurasia*, *Argila* (1968), are clearly an extension of his earlier 8mm experiments and form something of a transitional phase.

Schroeter's second phase truly begins in 1969 with his first feature *Eika Katappa* and includes a number of films made in co-production with the Second German Television station ZDF. During this phase, Schroeter moves away from the largely experimental techniques employed during the first phase to produce films with more complex thematic concerns and a more developed sense of characterization, although contained within highly fragmentary and episodic narrative structures. These films are composed of disconnected narrative fragments that often have little if any connection with one another. Sebastian Feldmann describes the structure of

Der Tod der Maria Malibran 1971 - Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek © Digne M. Marcovicz



Schroeter's last 16mm film *Flocons d'or* (1976) with the term *Erzählflöckchen*, or 'little narrative flakes', a term that aptly described the structure of most of the films of this period.⁸ In these films, Schroeter often borrows his themes from literature, opera, theatre, legends and fairy tales as well as historical and contemporary popular culture and Christian iconography. He cites as influences figures as diverse as Maria Callas, W. S. Burrows, Friedrich Hölderlin, Carl Theodor Dreyer, Lautréamont, Catarina Valente and James Baldwin.⁹ His films frequently contain recurring scenes of love, death and longing most well expressed by the German word *Sehnsucht*, a word that refers to an intense longing or desire for something or someone that remains unattainable or intangible. It is this concept that links Schroeter to the traditions of German Romanticism. It would be a mistake, however, to simply label Schroeter a 'neo-romantic', for what Schroeter does with this romantic legacy is to deconstruct it into fragments: quoting and reinterpreting these fragments for the late twentieth century. It seems to me that rather than simply returning nostalgically to the ideas and ideals of a past age, Schroeter captures and rescues mere fragments of the dreams and hopes of the past as he finds them in a state of irreparable decay. His work, as it shall be discussed throughout this book is one of an allegorist, one who shapes new meaning out of existing material. Contrary to the ideals of Romanticism, Schroeter does not maintain a distinction between high art and popular culture but attempts to break down these distinctions, to render them superfluous. Thus, in *Eika Katappa*, for example, Schroeter has an ageing pop singer die as dramatically on the side of a country road as a great Diva might perform one of opera's great death scenes on stage.

In another film of this period, *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1971), Schroeter depicts the death of the nineteenth-century mezzo-soprano Maria Malibran. The film features one of Schroeter's most frequent collaborators and friend Magdalena Montezuma, who appeared in no less than nineteen of his films. Montezuma plays Malibran, briefly sketching the singer's death in a few simple gestures. Schroeter is not concerned with reproducing every detail of Malibran's death, nor does he attempt to recreate it 'as it really was', rather, he seems to dehistoricize the event, even changing the location of her death on stage from Manchester to 'an evening with Robert Schuhmann and Franz Liszt' in Berlin, indicated by an intertitle in the film. For Schroeter, the historical place of death is not what is important but, rather, through Malibran he shows us a life that has been exhausted, consumed by its own intensity as she quite literally 'sings herself to death'. The viewer comes away with the impression that for Schroeter, Malibran could have died anywhere, as long as she was on stage when it happened! Malibran prefigures some of the other highly passionate but ultimately mortal figures that appear in later films, including *Der Rosenkönig* (1984), *Malina* (1990), *Deux* (2002) and the various ageing divas who appear in his poetic collage film *Poussières d'amour* (1996).

In *Der Bomberpilot* (1970), Schroeter displays a similar disrespect for historical 'truth' in his treatment of post-Second World War Germany. In this film he tells the stories of three fictional women who had performed in Nazi revues during the war. Rather than attempting an 'authentic' recreation of historical post-war Germany, Schroeter

uses these three figures to provide the viewer with a sense of the disorder, crisis and repression that beset the German population after the war and resulted, according to Margarete and Thomas Mitscherlich, in a popular forgetfulness regarding the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime.¹⁰ Schroeter does this by attributing to these women a kind of 'false' memory regarding the recent past, which is manifested physically through the somewhat 'faulty' gestures they perform while recreating their revue show performance. The viewer is lead to question how these three somewhat clumsy individuals could possibly have conformed to the order, discipline and regularity that characterized the products of the Nazi culture industry, and we are by extension also asked to question 'official' versions of that history.

Schroeter's films in general, but particularly the films of this pivotal second phase, present a challenge to the fixed, hierarchical status of art and culture in western society; one of his great achievements is to bring the very notion of such a hierarchy into question. This is not to say that his attitude toward 'high' art is dismissive, on the contrary. As Ulrike Sieglöhr has argued, although "Schroeter challenges certain aspects of canonical art, he does not reject 'high' art as such. His approach is always *ambiguous*, since he celebrates as much as he parodies."¹¹ Indeed, ambiguity is a constant trait of Schroeter's films, allowing for a degree of openness that tends either

Salome 1971 - Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek © Werner Schroeter



to engage or frustrate viewers depending on their tastes. Schroeter's films, particularly of his second phase, require us, as viewers, to engage in a complex process of interpretation. In fact, it is upon this very notion of ambiguity that any interpretation of Schroeter's work must hinge, for nothing in Schroeter's cinema is simple. His work is a testament to the very possibility of the coexistence of both celebration and parody, of both 'high' and 'low'. As we shall discover in chapter two of this book, just as in Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory, in the films of Werner Schroeter everything holds within it the possibility of referring to something else. Schroeter's films always contain multiple levels of meaning.

Predating his debut as a theatre director by one year,¹² Schroeter directed two explicitly 'theatrical' films in 1971: *Salome*, based on the play by Oscar Wilde, and William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. While both share a dramatic heritage, aesthetically, these films could not be further apart. *Salome* was filmed in the Roman ruins of Baalbek in Lebanon forming an appropriately allegorical proscenium stage setting. Initially, the camera observes the scenes from a static position in front of the improvised stage with little editing, before beginning to take part in the action as the drama (and *Salome*) begins to unravel. Exploratory travelling shots make visible the great fissures in the stone foundations just as Herod's world begins to crumble. *Macbeth*, by contrast, was filmed on video and entirely in a studio with a mobile hand-held camera that brings the viewer very close to the action. The disjunctive editing makes for a highly disorienting viewing experience. Magdalena Montezuma cross-dresses in both of these films, playing Herod and *Macbeth* respectively.

In 1978, Schroeter moved into the realm of the 35mm feature film with *Regno di Napoli*. This third phase is comprised of two strands: One being the fiction films, and the other the collage-like documentaries, or 'essay' films. With the fiction films of this phase, Schroeter begins to develop much more complex narrative techniques and strategies and tends to move away from the largely episodic structures that dominate the second phase. As a result, distribution of his films became much more viable and his films began to reach a wider audience. The first of these, *Regno di Napoli* is constructed as a family chronicle and is played out in and around a poor neighbourhood in the southern Italian city of Naples from 1943 to 1972. It focuses upon brother and sister Massimo and Vittoria, whose names mean 'the great' and 'victory'. They become allegorical but ironic figures in the film: allegorical because they embody wider social phenomena such as the conflict between politics and religion within the confines of the domestic sphere. Ironic because, despite the resilience these children demonstrate as they pass through life from childhood to adulthood, they are ultimately unable to rise very far out of the misery into which they are born in post-war Italy. Massimo and Vittoria become material and mortal emblems, allegorical emblems, of the eternal struggle against poverty.

By adopting a style clearly influenced by Italian Neo-Realism, Schroeter cleverly uses these individual stories to parallel and comment upon wider historical events as they occur in Italy over the period of the film. Schroeter makes use of a voice-over chronicler, who comments upon the wider historical context at two-yearly intervals.



Regno di Napoli 1978 – Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin – Deutsche Kinemathek © Digne M. Marcovicz

The chronicler begins with an authoritative and 'objective' attitude, but perhaps paralleling the processes of the viewer, gradually becomes involved in this family's story and moves from recounting mere historical 'facts' to becoming interested in the many 'wisps of narrative' that make up the history of any country. For the first time in his film-making career, Schroeter adopts a chronological narrative structure, more easily digestible by a wider audience, but without ever abandoning his very idiosyncratic artistic vision, which is displaced into the highly stylized and allegorical characterization of minor characters such as Pupetta (doll), the particularly witch-like, heavily made-up factory owner, who attempts to drive the young Vittoria into prostitution, Palumbo the wealthy lecherous mamma's boy, and Christian Democrat who tries to lure young boys into his parlour with his giant fish tank, or Mrs Cavioli who sells her daughter Rosa to an American sailor for a sack of flour. Schroeter won the 1979 German Film Prize for best direction for this remarkable, passionate and moving film.

With his next film, *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* (1980), Schroeter again returns to southern Italy. This film begins in the town of Palermo, Sicily, where the film's central figure, Nicola, is a young victim of Sicily's high unemployment rate. He decides to leave Palermo for Wolfsburg in search of employment. In doing so, Nicola joins the many other men from places like Italy, Greece and Turkey who became Germany's large



Regno di Napoli 1978 - Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek © Werner Schroeter

force of guest workers (Gastarbeiter) during the 1960s and 1970s. Along with Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1973), Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Shirin's Wedding* (1976), as well as films of Iranian immigrant film-maker Sohrab Shahid Saless, Schroeter's film becomes one of a handful of films to broach the subject of the difficulties foreigners faced in their attempts to integrate into German society without the support of the family and community structures they had left behind in their home countries. Like *Regno di Napoli*, *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* follows a chronological structure, but Schroeter's innovation in this film is to divide the narrative into three distinct sections or acts, each having their own particular style. These three acts function like three episodes of a Passion play, a fact that is made more explicit by the images of a Passion play, which are inserted at various key moments throughout the film. The first episode takes place in Palermo. Nicola goes to visit various friends and relatives to tell them of his decision to go to Germany and to receive their advice. In doing so he gathers together memories and impressions, fragments that he will take with him to Germany. In doing so, Schroeter casts Nicola as something of an allegorist, one with a melancholy temperament who collects together fragments of his culture. This episode is shot and performed in a style that alludes to Italian neo-realism with a simple observational camera, but also recalls the films of Schroeter's contemporary, the Italian film-maker Pier Paolo Pasolini. After the transitional interlude of his rail journey, Nicola arrives in Germany, marking the beginning of the second episode of the film. After his arrival in Wolfsburg and following his initial disorientation, the owner of a bar, an Italian woman reminiscent in her attitude and gestures of the bar owner in Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, helps Nicola to find work and a place to stay. Nicola soon befriends a young German girl, but she uses him only to get back at her boyfriend. Hurt and angry at being used, Nicola stabs the boyfriend and another young man to death. This episode is filmed and performed with the mix of stylized realism and melodrama familiar from many of Fassbinder's own films. Nicola's trial comprises the entire final episode of the film, which takes on a highly theatrical and disorienting character. Nicola looks on silently as the rather bizarre courtroom antics take place. While witnesses are being questioned, the judges pull faces and slump on the bench, the mothers of the victims perform strange repetitive gestures in the gallery, first they fight and then they kiss, while an interpreter simultaneously and continuously translates the proceedings between German and Sicilian. It becomes almost impossible for the spectator to follow what is going on: we become just as confused as Nicola. Faster montage sequences bring a disarray of memory-images to bear upon the courtroom sequence in which the defence argues that Germany and Sicily represent vastly different worlds that cannot be judged upon the same criteria. The film ends leaving the case unresolved, but leaving us with an image of an opening window through which to reflect upon the cultural divides that separate the world at large.¹³ *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* won the prestigious Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 1980, notably the first Golden Bear ever awarded to a German director.

With *Tag der Idioten* (1982), Schroeter perhaps draws upon his brief studies of psychology. The film centres around a passionate woman, Carole (played by the well-known French actor Carole Bouquet), who feels alienated and repressed by the

highly institutionalized public and private spheres of western society. Unable to extract any kind of emotional response from her reserved boyfriend, Carole seeks attention by falsely denouncing her neighbours as terrorists. With this detail Schroeter briefly touches upon the panic and paranoia that was brought about by the German government crackdown on terrorism at its height during 1977 and Carole's subsequent institutionalization in a mental asylum can be seen as an allegory for a society wishing to suppress radical activity of any sort. Schroeter manages, however, to keep this socio-political issue well in the background of his film, unlike other films that take this up more directly such as *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* (Margarethe von Trotta & Volker Schlöndorff, 1975) and *Marianne and Julianne* (Margarethe von Trotta, 1981). In *Tag der Idioten* Schroeter returns to a less linear narrative structure, more reminiscent of the episodic films of his second phase. He employs numerous hallucinatory sequences in order to convey the protagonist's state of mind. Furthermore, much of the film's meaning is delivered through Carole's body, facial expressions and gestures rather than through dialogue, and the film's montage serves to create spatial and temporal disorientation. Schroeter again won the German Film Prize for best direction for this film.

Like *Tag der Idioten*, *Der Rosenkönig* (1984–6) is another of Schroeter's feature films that proceeds by way of a disjunctive array of image and sound fragments, rather than as a fully-fledged narrative. Karsten Witte has said of this film: "Instead of a story, there are fragments. Instead of a narrative, this film is a 'camera-poem' for three bodies, three voices."¹⁴ Schroeter creates a constellation of images around the central figure of Albert (Mostefa Djadjam), a gardener who is obsessed with cultivating the perfect rose. But this obsession becomes displaced when he captures a young man (Antonio Orlando) stealing the devotional offerings from the small chapel on his property. Albert keeps the man detained in his barn and comes every day to lovingly feed and tend him, all under the watchful and disapproving eye of his mother (Magdalena Montezuma). The film overflows with Christian iconography and towards the end of the film the young man, who comes to resemble a combination of the figures of Christ and Saint Sebastian, becomes a potent emblem of homoeroticism, as Albert carefully grafts roses onto his body, sacrificing him through the process of attempting to create the romantic ideal of the beautiful perfected individual. This is the first time that Schroeter has dealt at such length with the subject of homosexuality. This was also the last film Schroeter made with his long-time collaborator Magdalena Montezuma, who died shortly after the film was completed. Her weak and failing body brings an acute sense of mortality to the film.

Although *Der Rosenkönig* is Schroeter's most detailed exploration of homosexuality, almost all of his films employ homoerotic imagery frequently embodied in the figures of beautiful young men, who seem to echo Schroeter's own flamboyant yet melancholy persona. His films, however, never become essentialist political treatises on homosexual issues as such, for such relationships are framed more by wider themes of deep passion and love that can manifest themselves as much between individuals of various sexual persuasions as between an artist and her or his work. In fact, as with

other binaries, Schroeter does not uphold rigid societal distinctions between homo- and heterosexuality, but renders such distinctions somewhat irrelevant.

To date, Schroeter has written or co-written most of his feature films. *Malina* (1990) is an exception, being based on the novel by the Austrian feminist author Ingeborg Bachmann and adapted for the screen by Elfriede Jelenik. Starring the well-known French actress Isabelle Huppert, the film centres upon a writer who finds herself unable to adequately express herself. Schroeter uses powerful imagery of mirrors and fire to convey the idea of an identity in disarray and crisis and creates a palpable sense of suffocation through the repetition of scenes, involving the protagonist having to remind herself to breathe. “I must breath, I must breathe”, she says to herself at various points throughout the film. The novel is widely considered to be a modern classic of feminist literature. It is not surprising, therefore, that reception of this film among critics was polarized. Feminists in particular complained that Schroeter had reduced a figure of feminist emancipation to a mere stereotype of an intellectual woman suffering a pathological disorder.¹⁵ Much of this criticism fails, however, to approach the film through its cinematic elements. Through Jelenik’s screenplay, Schroeter does not attempt to simply transpose the words on the page to the screen, but through camera, framing, editing and performance engages in a cinematic interpretation of the novel. *Malina* won the German Film Prize for best film in 1991.

Between 1990 and 2001, Schroeter made no feature films. During this time he made two documentaries or poetic collage films (to be discussed shortly) but dedicated most of his time to directing theatre and opera. *Deux*, released in 2002, represents Schroeter’s return to feature film-making and is his third film featuring French actress Isabelle Huppert. In this film, which premiered at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival during the director’s fortnight, Huppert plays dual roles as twins who were separated at birth.¹⁶ With *Deux*, Schroeter returns to the highly fragmentary style of his films of the second phase and revisits and recycles many of his favourite themes in true allegorical fashion. In fact, the film works very much like a condensation and sedimentation in fragments of all the major stylistic and thematic elements of his entire film-making career, including opera, sailors, quotations from Lautréamont, cabaret scenes, Christian imagery, and a fragmentary sub-plot about a serial killer who leaves a red rose with each victim, vividly recalling *Der Rosenkönig*. The film resists any narrative re-telling as it is comprised of a series of highly gestural *Erzählflöckchen* in which the two women’s lives are interwoven through a complex and disorganized montage of fragments, reminiscent of such films as *Der Tod der Maria Malibran*, *Flocons d’or* and *Eika Katappa*. A third woman, their mother Anna (played by veteran French actress Bulle Ogier who had appeared in *Flocons d’or*), also features prominently in the film, making contact with her daughters only via a note written on postcards of Sintra Castle. This is no film about the search for origins, however, but rather consists of the interweaving of individual destinies as a series of independent allegorical layers that overlap and inflect one another but ultimately never truly intersect. As with so many of his other films, life and death enter into an interminable circuit of passion or more specifically *Leidenschaft* that, in the words of

Michel Foucault, “floats” in “a kind of unstable time that is pursued for obscure reasons.”¹⁷

Deux not only recalls many of Schroeter’s previous fiction films, its style and structure also links it very closely to his non-fiction collage or essay films also made during this third phase, particularly the highly performative films *Poussières d’amour* (1996) in which Isabelle Huppert also appeared and *La répétition générale* (1980). Schroeter constructs these films not as didactic or expository documentaries but, rather, as poetic collages of images and sounds around a particular event or figure. The first of these is *La répétition générale*, a film originally commissioned by the second German television station (*Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen*) ZDF as a short report on the World Theatre Festival in Nancy, France. Inspired by a number of the performers at the festival, the film grew into a beautiful 90-minute essay film. In particular, Schroeter focuses upon the work of the German dancer Pina Bausch and her troupe from the Wuppertal Tanztheater, the Japanese butoh dancer Kazuo Ohno and the American performance artist Pat Olesko. From the subject matter, which consists of a collage of various impressions of the festival such as rehearsals, performances, interviews, readings, conversations about love, death and theatre and poetic interludes, Schroeter develops his very own form of the documentary film. Such films do not so much attempt to convey information about a subject, but rather collect together a vast array of fragments around a particular theme, which are meant to form constellations in the spectator’s mind. Schroeter also uses strategies of image-music montage and repetition that he had developed in his films of the second phase.

All of these collage films take a similar form, which Schroeter has used not only for theatrical subjects, such as Ariane Mnouchkine and her theatre troupe ‘Théâtre du Soleil’ in *A la recherche du soleil. Sur Ariane Mnouchkine* (1986/7), but also as an effective form of social and political critique. He achieves this with both *Der lachende Stern* (1983) which takes the inaugural Manila International Film Festival as a starting point for a foray into various layers of the social and political history of The Philippines, and *De l’Argentine* (1983–5) which similarly delves into the layers of Argentinian history, culture and politics. In the latter film, Schroeter also interleaves various fictional episodes between the documentary layers.

Like his earliest 8mm films, which focussed upon images of the opera diva Maria Callas, with *Poussières d’amour* Schroeter returns once again to the cult of the diva, but this time they are living, breathing, singing and ageing divas. This film had been conceived many years before and Schroeter had intended to make it with Maria Callas before her premature death of a heart attack in 1977, aged 53. The film takes as its point of departure a question posed by Roland Barthes in a short essay entitled “The Romantic Song”.¹⁸ The question asks: how do singers find emotion in their voices? In attempting to answer this question Schroeter invited some of his most admired opera singers, young and old, to a ruined thirteenth-century abbey in France to rehearse an aria and to talk about singing, love and relationships. Schroeter comes closest to answering his opening question through the bodies of

three ageing divas: Martha Mödl, Rita Gorr and Anita Cerquetti, the latter of whom gave up singing at the height of her career. In the film, her entire body seems to listen as she mimes to some of her most famous recordings, including the “Casta Diva” aria from Vincenzo Bellini’s opera *Norma*, which continues on the soundtrack long after her image has faded from the screen at the conclusion of the film. In *Die Königin* (2000), about the theatrical life of the veteran German actress Marianne Hoppe, Schroeter continues his engagement with the ageing performing body. In this film he combines his love of theatre and film to create a highly impressionistic memorial to Hoppe’s life featuring interviews with people who have worked with her and Hoppe reading passages from parts she has played. Throughout the film we see her intermittently looking at old black-and-white photographs of herself, and Schroeter uses these moments to evoke palpable memories of her past. As with so many of Schroeter’s films, the past and the present coalesce to generate dialectical images and Hoppe is given the status of an allegorical figure, or an “expressive statuary,” as Walter Benjamin might say casting a melancholy eye at her own life caught up in the passage of time.

The films of Werner Schroeter form a vast and diverse body of work through which he has, fulfilling Fassbinder’s 1979 premonition, managed to secure for himself a certainly eccentric but pivotal place in the history film. In order to understand this place more fully, however, it is necessary to outline his relationship to the institutions of and discourses surrounding the New German Cinema.

German Film Subsidy

Throughout his career, Schroeter has demonstrated a remarkable ability to continue to produce films largely outside of the mechanisms of the German film subsidy system. This has enabled him to remain highly flexible and to make his films without many of the constraints placed upon film-makers by the state-administered financing and subsidy system. Although often starved of funds to make films, Schroeter nevertheless has managed to generate just the kind of non-commercial, author-driven films that the signatories of the Oberhausen Manifesto had aspired to in 1962.¹⁹ Ironically, however, he did so without recourse to the *Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film* (literally the ‘curators of young German film’), which grew out of the spirit of Oberhausen and was intended to financially assist young film-makers. The *Kuratorium* was a state-funded, but independently administered body made up primarily of film critics and specifically designed to fund young and first-time directors by way of interest-free loans. Between 1965 and 1968²⁰ independent film-makers were at last given access to some much needed funding with around twenty films being fully or partly financed during this period. The *Kuratorium* was, however, only short-lived. As Thomas Elsaesser points out, the established commercial film industry saw the *Kuratorium* as a threat, draining away funds from its own projects and immediately lobbied parliament for tax concessions to compensate for this perceived threat.²¹ The result was the passing of the Film Subsidy Bill (*Filmförderungsgericht FFG*) in December 1967 which led to the *Kuratorium* being subsumed by the Film Subsidy Board (*Filmförderungsanstalt FFA*) and having its funding substantially reduced. The FFA tended to favour established and commercially proven and thus ‘viable’

producers and directors in its structure, as funds were awarded on the basis of box office figures for an already released film, the so-called *Referenzfilm*, and these funds could be used only to finance another film. This meant that non-commercial and first-time directors, including and especially documentary film-makers whose films could not expect general theatrical exhibition would invariably miss out. It also ultimately put film-makers in the hands of the powerful distributors who could decide whether a film would be released at all. Elsaesser makes the point that the “Young German Film” – that is, those films, most of which were sponsored by the *Kuratorium* and made in the spirit of the Oberhausen Manifesto, between 1964 and 1971, suffered considerably from a lack of access to appropriate opportunities for distribution and exhibition, thereby, significantly limiting the possibility of finding an audience, let alone recouping any of the production costs.²²

Schroeter’s earliest films up to and including *Eika Katappa* were all self-produced and made without Government assistance of any kind from either the *Kuratorium* or the Film Subsidy Board. In an interview, Schroeter comments on his position in regard to film subsidy, emphasizing that despite the fact the board was designed in theory to assist non-commercial projects, it was necessary to first and foremost have a commercial approach to film-making. Schroeter comments:

What I find good, is that whoever has a few idiosyncrasies, like I do, should have ready access to the means of production such as, for example, film subsidy, which through my own stupidity I don’t make use of. Either I send off a script for funding too late or not at all...[the film financing organisations] make no sense at all, it’s just a theatre of corruption. Whoever is the fastest, the oldest, or the most favoured gets the money. I think it crazy to expect that all filmmakers should have such a commercial, petty-minded approach to filmmaking, which I don’t have.²³

It could be argued that even the aesthetic characteristics of Schroeter’s films are reflected in this overtly anti-commercial approach. In fact, he rarely begins shooting a film with a fully crafted script, but approaches each film with a few broadly sketched conceptual ideas. He encourages his actors to improvise and rarely intervenes in a scene as it plays out before the rolling camera. Even when he did conceive of a film such as the unrealized *Die Matrosen dieser Welt*,²⁴ as a “fully commercial feature film” it is primarily with the look and form of the film that he was concerned rather than with its projected commercial success, which for him was never an issue at all. In an interview he said of this proposed film that it would be made in “35mm Cinemascope and in colour. It will have a clear, simple dramaturgical structure with a story that will be told right to the end. Because of that, it will be also rather expensive to make.”

²⁵ Schroeter admitted that the possibility of gaining funding for such a film would be difficult given that it was so different from anything he had ever made before. Indeed he was not able to get funding for the film, and it was not until 1980 that a film based on the treatment was realized under the title *Weiße Reise*. The resulting film was certainly far from the ‘commercial’ film that Schroeter had at first conceived. As Eric Franck, who produced the film with Schroeter, recalls: “For us *Weiße Reise* was a ‘home movie’.” It was filmed entirely in Franck’s Zurich apartment in the spring of

1978 in seven nights (nights so as not to disturb the doctor's surgery below). In terms of the production Franck notes, "we had no technicians. Werner [Schroeter] did the sound, the camera, the lighting. Our parts were completely improvised."²⁶ Schroeter edited the film himself some eighteen months later after he had completed *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*. The example of *Die Matrosen dieser Welt/Weiße Reise* demonstrates that Schroeter's aesthetic conceptualization of cinema is intimately linked with the financial means. His improvisational method of working allows him to do the best he can with the means available at the time.

Given Schroeter's criticism of what he perceives to be the restrictive guidelines of the German film funding institutions, it almost seems incidental that he has occasionally received a subsidy. In the case of one of Schroeter's more recent films, *Die Königin* (2000), which was made with assistance from the Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg in co-production with three European television stations, ARTE, SBF and NDR, it may well be because he now has age and reputation on his side.

There are further avenues of financial assistance open to German film-makers. One of these is the system of quality ratings, and it is one form of subsidy that Schroeter has occasionally been able to make use of despite his overall resistance to dealing with government bodies. Quality ratings are awarded to films by the Film Ratings Board (*Filmbewertungsstelle Wiesbaden*, FBW) administered by the Hessian Minister for culture. Under this system, short films, features and documentaries are submitted to the FBW with a fee per meter of film. They are judged for their artistic, documentary or film-historical worth and then receive one of two ratings: either 'valuable' (*wertvoll*), or 'particularly valuable' (*besonders wertvoll*). In addition, the board might give the film further qualifications regarding, for example, exportability, suitability for use in museums or for adult education. A rating, known as a *Prädikat*, is also recognized by the FFA. It benefits film-makers by reducing the box office figures required before the FFA will grant an automatic subsidy for a subsequent film.²⁷ Ideally, the system of film ratings should help independent film-makers to bypass the FFA's selection guidelines, which are based primarily on the revenue of a previous film's theatrical release. In addition, in the early years of the New German Cinema, the relief from entertainment tax that a rating afforded "meant that it showed profit for the distributor on less real revenue."²⁸ But, as Elsaesser goes on to point out, the drawbacks of the scheme are twofold; he writes, "a quality rating often decided if a film was to be distributed at all," and the scheme could inevitably function as a form of censorship by "economically penalising politically inopportune films" such as Jean Marie Straub's *Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* (1968), which he cites as one example that "had to fight a long and much publicised battle to get a rating at all." Furthermore, the financial benefits of the FBW were only significant as long as films were still being taxed.²⁹

After the first amendment to the Film Subsidy Bill in 1971, the FBW became more interdependent with the FFA. The amended bill was designed to prevent subsidies from being granted to low quality or pornographic films. In line with this initiative, the minimum attendance quotas required for film subsidy were lowered for films that had

attained a quality rating from the FBW or a prize at a recognized festival.³⁰ Although this was good for those film-makers who were concerned with presenting some notion of 'national culture,' or were oriented in terms of the FBW's other criteria of quality, as either educative, archival or exportable, film-makers like Schroeter, whose films were certainly not commercially orientated and which had a much more eccentric and critical relationship to German culture as it had come to be institutionally defined, found the subsidy system just as exclusive and restrictive as it had ever been.

As a consequence of Schroeter's decision – whether by 'stupidity', circumstances or choice – to produce outside the mainstream of the subsidy system, he has had to forego not only the means of production but also the public profile that gaining funding would, by association, afford him. Through not actively seeking out State film funding, Schroeter is effectively resisting the tendency to be made into, in his own words, "common property", or a "nationalised figure" and thus has remained very much on the margins of both the New German Cinema as well as the discourses surrounding that cinema. What, to a large extent, has allowed Schroeter to bypass State funding but continue making films is the unique situation in the Federal Republic that facilitated an interdependence between the mediums of film and television.

Television

For Schroeter, as for other marginal directors in Germany, television proved to be much less restrictive, both financially and ideologically, than the official funding mechanisms of the German State. It offered not only himself and other somewhat marginal directors the chance to make and exhibit their films (in cinemas as well as television), but provided more established directors such as Fassbinder and Schlöndorff the opportunity to work more or less continuously between State and privately funded projects.

From his 1970 co-production of *Der Bomberpilot* with ZDF, almost all of Schroeter's films have been produced either fully or in part by television as commissions and co-productions. These commissions and co-productions with television effectively allowed Schroeter to sidestep the nationalistic guidelines of film funding.³¹ It is due to Schroeter's long and close relationship with television, described by Elsaesser as an "obligation," that he dubs Schroeter "the German Cinema's greatest marginal filmmaker."³² Schroeter's marginality in the cinema scene of West Germany stems in part and quite literally from the fact that he produces on the margins, not only of the dominant structures of financing, distribution and exhibition, but in the German Cinema's most peripheral, but no less important institution: television. Furthermore, it was one very small corner on the very margins of that institution – ZDF's *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* (The Little Television Play) – that was instrumental in securing his place, no matter how marginal, as one of the great directors of the German cinema. That this was possible at all – to be creating cinema within the institution of television – is a result of the unique interdependence between film and television in Germany. Moreover, the relative independence that some television stations had from direct governmental intervention, allowed them more scope to grant funding to risky

ventures without being directly accountable to the taxpayer, as a large proportion of their operating and production costs are raised through advertising revenue and do not come directly out of the public purse.

Therefore, what Elsaesser sees as Schroeter's "obligation" to work for television while still working within the conceptual and material framework of the cinema, arises from the fact that with little or no hope of securing funding from either the commercial sector or the regional or federal film funding bodies, television was really the only option, an option that also enabled other marginal film-makers such as Ulrike Ottinger and Herbert Achternbusch to produce highly experimental and unique films.

That Elsaesser describes Schroeter's relationship with television as obligatory is important, but less for what it says about the nature of television in the Federal Republic than the way it reflects the apparently narrow scope of film funding bodies and their counterparts in the commercial sector. From the beginning of his film career, Schroeter was neither making commercially viable films, nor was he willing to submit to the constraints of political policies and cultural mandates. Although German television stations are public institutions and as such are governed by politically informed cultural dictates of their own, the sheer volume of airtime to be filled, and their funding through advertising revenue means that it is necessary and possible for them to supplement in-house productions by purchasing local and international independent programme content, and, above all, enter into direct commissions and co-productions with film-makers themselves. Not only were film-makers such as Schroeter obliged to television, as Elsaesser suggests, television also had an obligation to film-makers and to the New German Cinema as a whole.

For many years television was literally the only avenue open to Schroeter for making the kinds of films he does.³³ That one can describe Schroeter's films as cinema, rather than television, is largely the result of the film funding policies of ZDF and the nurturing attitude toward cinematic experimentation and expression on the part of that station's regular late-night *das kleine Fernsehspiel* (dkF) programme which has been instrumental in facilitating Schroeter's ability to produce films fairly continuously throughout his career.³⁴

In her article, "The Radical Film Funding of ZDF", Sheila Johnston elucidates the importance that German television and ZDF, in particular, has had for the development and survival of the New German Cinema. She writes, "the New German Cinema owes its existence to the munificence of television."³⁵ At one time or another most directors of the New German Cinema have relied upon money from television for all or part of the production costs of their films, and while some, especially those who have attained international fame such as Fassbinder, Wenders and Herzog, easily obtain the support of private investors, they too often return to television seeking funding for subsequent projects, or are commissioned directly by a station to make a film.³⁶ In contrast to Elsaesser, who sees the nature of the relationship between the film-maker and television as an obligation on the part of the film-maker only, Johnston stresses the importance of seeing the nature of this

relationship as an interdependence, where film-makers are not only dependent to a greater or lesser extent on television, but where German television itself relies upon a "vital independent cinema" as it helps to satisfy a legally imposed mandate to "provide a forum for a range of different 'socially relevant groups'."³⁷ By funding and screening projects of independent film-makers, who themselves, it is hoped, will come from diverse social groups, television stations can be seen to be fulfilling this mandate imposed upon them by article 5 of the Basic Law, while also being in a position to fall back on the disclaimer that the views expressed in the programme are those of the film-maker and not necessarily those of the station. Effectively it is a way of being seen to be paying attention to socially relevant and sometimes sensitive issues, while at the same time deflecting public disapproval away from the station itself. "Like it or not," Johnston concludes, "these two German media are inextricably intertwined."³⁸

Despite the fact that all ten free-to-air television companies are structured as public service corporations, administered according to the dictates of the respective regional governments, and have fiscal and programming policies that are as much affected by political agendas as the film financing bodies, as Sheila Johnston points out, the various regional stations are subject to varying degrees of political influence but that, in theory, this system ensures a significant amount of diversity.³⁹ Johnston gives two examples of these regional variations before concentrating on the case of ZDF.⁴⁰ She writes, "if a radical filmmaker is hardly likely to be welcomed with open arms by the BR (*Bayerisches Rundfunk*, the station which services the Catholic, conservative South Germany, power base of right-wing politician Franz-Josef Strauss), she or he can always go elsewhere: the wealthy, SPD-dominated WDR (*Westdeutsche Rundfunk*) is a good bet."⁴¹ In Schroeter's case, it is somewhat ironic that his first film to be purchased by a television station was the radically experimental *Eika Katappa*, bought by the conservative BR in 1970. In support of Johnston's argument regarding the station's conservatism it is significant to note that the station made an editorial decision to screen the film minus the last and most radical of its nine parts. Since then all of Schroeter's commissions and co-productions with television have been with less conservative stations such as WDR, HR (*Hessische Rundfunk*) and ZDF.

Das kleine Fernsehspiel

ZDF's weekly late-night programme, *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* (*dkF*), takes up a very small corner in the huge institution of the Federal Republic's broadcasting corporations. However, in spite of its budget and staffing restrictions, as a facilitator, producer and exhibitor of independent and experimental cinema, it has been one of the German Cinema's most important sites specifically committed to the promotion of aesthetic experiment, and an alternative scene/screen upon which a director such as Schroeter may make his or her mark outside of 'official' circles. Tucked safely inside one of the least conservative stations in the country, *dkF* remains relatively isolated from social obligations and political pressures while taking quite literally the mandate to represent "all socially relevant groups".

As Sheila Johnston writes:

Das kleine Fernsehspiel is a very small fish in the vast pool of West German broadcasting. A sub-division of the ZDF's main television drama department (*Die Hauptredaktion Fernsehspiel und Film*), it operates with a minimal budget, a staff of only ten, and a single weekly slot: every Thursday at 10pm. Yet, despite its own limitations and the crisis besetting West German broadcasting as a whole, *dkF* has attracted international attention and acclaim for its pioneering programme policy.⁴²

The feature that sets *dkF* apart from other, larger television drama departments is its "explicit mandate to promote aesthetic experiment" in cinema.⁴³ The small size of the department, rather than being a limitation, in fact, has proven to be an asset in seeing the most radical and experimental of projects through production. As Johnston points out, in contrast to the large selection committees that preside over such State-controlled institutions as the Film Subsidy Board, which has 33 members and depends upon a majority support for a script before funding will be granted, at *dkF* "choices are made 'communally, not by majority'; sometimes only two members are in favour of a project, which is nonetheless realised."⁴⁴

In an interview Eckhart Stein explained the features that set his department apart from other departments of ZDF as well as those of other German TV stations.⁴⁵ Firstly, as a sub-department of the overall drama department of ZDF, *dkF* is oriented above all towards the cinema rather than conventional television drama. As Stein remarks, "our objective is to create a forum, or an anthology of new cinematic expression from beyond television."⁴⁶ Furthermore, Stein goes on to point out that almost all of their films are shown in cinemas, often before being broadcast on television. Stein is also keen to stress the fact that as a result of having their own set budget and time slot they are not under pressure from the station to either gain wide public acceptance or have large audience figures. According to Stein, the fact that most of the films for their department are made as co-productions with the film-makers themselves, effectively allows them to place all artistic control in the hands of the film-maker with as little editorial control or censorship from ZDF as possible. As a department committed to the continued exploration of cinematic expression, Stein explains that it is not their intention to provide large budgets for the development of major feature films, rather in the spirit of experimentation, they prefer films to be made with only the money provided by them as a co-production with the film-maker: "We consider a film that is totally financed by us as a co-production, because we say – morally, we have to say – that the underpaid work of a filmmaker during eleven months of production counts as co-production."⁴⁷ This gives *dkF* the possibility of being able to finance around 35 essentially independent films a year.⁴⁸

In addition to their own productions, *dkF* have a policy to pass on scripts and treatments, not suitable for their own department, to other departments within ZDF and also to any of the other nine regionally based stations, which all contribute to the first national channel ARD. Stein explains:

we try to convince them to take over filmmakers after we have done a first or second film because we don't want a filmmaker to work for our department until he's 65...There are many examples, especially of German filmmakers, who did their first and second films with us and then moved on to bigger money and other possibilities.⁴⁹

Werner Schroeter is a case in point, one who Stein himself takes as an example: "A good example is Werner Schroeter, who started as an outsider, an underground filmmaker, and is now getting large budgets."⁵⁰ Schroeter, however, is also an unusual exception who co-produced many more than one or two films with *dkF*, and has probably had one of the longest associations with the department than any other German director.⁵¹

With television, the New German Cinema's *other* institution, Schroeter was able to find an alternative path into the German cinema scene during the 1970s and in so doing was largely able to bypass the social and cultural obligations that come with State financing. But Schroeter was to take up a cultural position within the New German Cinema that sits somewhere between European art cinema and the kind of counter-cultural cinema proposed by such lobbyists as Alexander Kluge.

Cultural Cinema and Counter-Culture: A Cultural Mode of Production

Schroeter's choice to work on the very edges of the film subsidy system must be seen as part of a conscious decision to also stand apart from an institutionalized conception of cinema as 'national culture' that tends to proliferate a myth of the continuity of German 'Kultur' that dates back to the Enlightenment. This myth tends to privilege 'high' culture over so-called 'low' or popular culture, however, in Schroeter's cinematic lexicon not only is there no distinction between 'high' and 'low' forms, for him, that which might form a part of high culture (theatre, opera, painting, sculpture etc.), has already become a ruinous artefact. As the German film scholar and critic Karsten Witte has written:

What other directors can only attempt with false pretensions, Schroeter achieves with a light touch: to construct in film, out of the rubble of high culture, models of a ruinous but never ruined counter-culture.⁵²

With his references to "rubble" and the ruinous nature of Schroeter's project, Witte hints at the allegorical nature of Schroeter's films to be taken up later in this book. For the moment, however, it will be useful to outline Schroeter's relationship to the cultural modes of production and reception that helped to shape the new German Cinema. As with his relationship to the funding bodies, Schroeter continually distanced himself from the counter-cinema that was being produced at the heart of the New German Cinema.

It is through the notion of culture that some of the contradictory forces at work in the development of the New German Cinema become evident. These forces first become apparent via the sentiments of the Oberhausen Manifesto, which called for State

intervention in the development of a new German film culture, leading to a cinema that was empowered through its legitimization as an art form akin to theatre, literature and music. At the same time, this meant film could be enlisted by the State as a tool for the promotion of German culture abroad, a situation that, ironically, left independent film-makers at risk of becoming obliged to, and, thus, also answerable to the German public. These independent film-makers were in danger of becoming 'public institutions'.

In their Manifesto of 1962, the Oberhausenerers identified the need for the injection of money to assist film-makers in realizing projects of the proposed new cinema. As equally important as their call for new economic and formal conceptions for the constitution of a new cinema, was the call for a complete renewal of the *intellectual* conception of German cinema. This new intellectual conception of cinema was necessary for them to wrest free from the stranglehold of commercial imperatives. This helped to plant the seeds for the emergence of a new, cultural mode of production as an alternative to the industrial and commercial modes that had dominated since the end of the Second World War with the saturation of the German market by Hollywood films.

Despite their battle cry "the old film is dead. We believe in the new one", the New German film-makers faced a constant struggle against counter-lobbying by the commercial producers in order to secure and maintain a share of film funding and subsidies for independent film-makers. Rather than mounting a direct challenge to the industrial mode of film-making on its own terms, however, the aim of the Oberhausen Manifesto was to shift the very terms and conditions of film-making away from an emphasis on commerce and into the realms of art and culture. Above all, the Manifesto identified the need for a programme of cultural subsidy designed to favour films of artistic or cultural value to be established. According to Thomas Elsaesser "West Germany was the first major capitalist country where the State, directly via its Ministry of the Interior, indirectly via grant-awarding bodies, assumed for filmmaking the role of patron traditionally associated more with education and the performing arts than with the cinema."⁵³ This opened the way for a cultural as opposed to a commercial mode of film production to be established. It was based on the principle that film could indeed be considered an art form and therefore films should have similar access to funding made available to other forms of artistic production.⁵⁴

Under this model of patronage and commission it became the role of the German state to assume the position of patron for independent film-making via the cultural policies of the Ministry of the Interior and a "political will" on the part of that Ministry "to see film acquire the status of 'Kultur'".⁵⁵ Whether as a direct recipient of the state's patronage via the FFA, or indirectly through a rating, the adoption of a cultural mode of production affected the role of the film-maker in at least two distinct and radically opposed ways.

Firstly, a cultural mode of production attempts to shift the emphasis from capitalism and consumerism in the production of film and direct it more toward artistic self-expression.

Under the cultural mode of production, the director assumes the position of artist or author in the sense that those terms had formerly been applied only to practitioners of fine arts, literature and music since the Enlightenment. Secondly, however, by accepting the patronage of the state, the film-maker would be impelled to accept a variety of social obligations. In this relationship of artist and patron, the artist, in this case the film-maker, becomes a public institution charged in principle with the duty of fostering national identity at home as well as representing German culture abroad. With the New German Cinema, writes Elsaesser, the "German government...had found a 'crucial artistic medium for the manifestation of national identity'."⁵⁶

Schroeter, who as I have demonstrated above, remained largely outside of the subsidy system, also resisted being drawn into the forces of the cultural mode of production not only on financial and political levels but also on the levels of art and culture. He was outwardly suspicious and critical of institutionalized conceptions of culture. Elsaesser writes:

The State, addressed by the filmmaker as patron, not surprisingly in turn addressed the filmmaker, assigning him a specific role and public function. If the role was that of 'artist', the function was to represent 'national culture'. Werner Schroeter recognised the dilemma early on.⁵⁷

And he quotes Schroeter:

With my mini-productions I am something of a marginal figure but I'm just as embroiled in 'Kultur' as is Fassbinder or Reitz. And I find this abominable. I think the worst danger for me and for others is that we become nationalised figures, common property.⁵⁸

Schroeter's use of the phrase "embroiled in 'Kultur'" here signals his awareness that, even though he remains very much on the margins of the institutional mechanisms of German film culture – subsidy, distribution and exhibition – his work is nevertheless affected by and embroiled in the context of these dominant structures precisely because his own mode of film-making remains irreconcilable with that of the State-patronized cultural mode of production. Schroeter may, for a large part of his career, have been 'obliged' to television, but for him it appears to have been the lesser of two evils. It meant that he would not be 'obliged' to the State as an artist is to a patron. In refusing to enter into a cultural contract with the State, by failing to submit appropriate treatments to the Film Subsidy Board for funding, Schroeter is effectively refusing to become public property. As a result it could be argued that Schroeter's films suffer through not having access to State funding simply because his films fail to satisfy the cultural mandates of those organizations. On the other hand, it could also be argued that his films would have no doubt suffered had they been moulded to fit such requirements. Having largely avoided a direct engagement in the processes of the cultural mode of production, Schroeter appears to be keenly aware of the tensions involved in producing 'products' for the cinema in an industrial society to which, ultimately, some kind of use value would be attached.

It is necessary to see the emergence of a cultural mode of film production in Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s as having a dialectical relationship to the industrial mode, and not simply as a new mode that was to replace the old as the Oberhausener had, somewhat idealistically, hoped. Even more than it allowed for the exploration of artistic concerns or the development of an outlet for artistic expression not dictated to by forces of the commercial market such as profitability, the cultural mode of production represented an answer to the threat of the increasing industrialization of film production in Germany since the end of the Second World War. At the same time this cultural mode of production engaged independent film-makers in a parallel process of commodity production, if not always directly for a consuming 'public' but indirectly via the State.

A tension certainly exists therefore, between the willingness on the part of the State to foster a lively independent cinema and the State's need to justify to the public its role as patron of film culture by setting limits on the very definition of culture and the notion of national identity.⁵⁹ In a sense, what the cultural mode of production results in is not essentially that far removed from the productions churned out by the commercial film industry. Instead of the production of commercial commodities, which are exchanged for economic gain, films as cultural commodities are produced and exchanged on the local market as bearers of national identity and promoted on the international market as high art in order to "represent West Germany [as opposed to East Germany] as the legitimate heir of German culture."⁶⁰

From Critical to Counter-Cinema

This is not to say, however, that any or all the directors of the New German cinema could, or indeed would, be co-opted fully into a position of submission and compromise on the grounds of public accountability. Several, including Alexander Kluge, Werner Herzog and not to mention Schroeter himself, were outspokenly critical of the institutional structures upon which many of them, for a time at least, were nevertheless dependent.⁶¹ The exchange of 'cultural' commodities brings with it its own degree of restrictions, which manifest themselves ultimately as a kind of censorship. Alexander Kluge has stated the problem in the following way:

The standards of culture and aesthetic quality are ambiguous in relation to the cinema. To the future archaeologists of our film landscape, almost everything will appear as culture, even the so-called no-quality films. The federal subsidy system, however, insists upon top quality. The production of top quality films is hemmed in by bureaucracy, planning, private ownership, centralisation, business, censorship and a mechanical pragmatism which does not sound like censorship but actually represents one of the most effective instruments of present-day censorship.⁶²

Elsaesser phrases the dilemma of independent film-making most succinctly: "In Western democracies, the problem with patronage is that those who receive it must not appear to bite too fiercely the hand that feeds them, while displaying sufficient discontent to pass as independent."⁶³ So, while the New German Cinema is

characterized by its diversity of vision, content and style, this can be seen less as a consequence of cultural policies and film subsidies, but, as Kluge has put it, “*in spite*” of them.⁶⁴ The New German Cinema is marked most visibly by the contradiction between independence and public accountability.⁶⁵

Often the content of the films themselves bear witness to the tensions inherent in the bureaucratization and commercialization of art. Fassbinder’s 1970 film *Rio das Mortes* reads as a critical parable of the tension between realizing one’s aspirations of film-making and the necessity for either financial or cultural justification. A brief detour through this film would therefore be appropriate.

The film’s narrative follows two former school friends, Michael and Günther, one a labourer, and the other a door-to-door salesman whose company, significantly, sells only “products relating to culture – globes, atlases, records, books, language courses etc.”, as they revive and pursue a childhood dream to travel to Peru in search of buried treasure. As with a film, they first devise a budget with the assistance of the local travel agent. Together they will need a total of 34,440 Deutschmarks. Günther calculates that it will take at least 15.7 months just to save his share. In desperation Michael sells his car and Günther persuades his mother (played by Fassbinder’s own mother) to give him the small amount of money she has managed to save for his wedding.⁶⁶ The DM4,000 they have managed to raise will barely cover airfares so they attempt another, more businesslike approach. The two approach the uncle of Michael’s girlfriend, an affluent businessman, with a proposal in the form of an improvised idea to farm cotton in Peru. Their plan, which they have no intention of pursuing, devised only as a means to get to Peru, is, of course, financially unfeasible and the uncle refuses to advance them any money. Similarly, another plan to seek government assistance for an archaeological expedition to Peru also fails because they have no references or qualifications in that field. They are told at this point by the government official that there are professional requirements that need to be “fed into the computer” and that ultimately it is the “computer that decides” after processing the data supplied in their application forms. “I’m afraid, gentlemen, that I cannot help you” he concludes and ushers them out the door. Finally, upon overhearing a conversation in a bar concerning a certain Frau Martinsen who reportedly gives out money to “theatre people, painters” and even “filmmakers” “as long as they’re mad enough”, Michael and Günther go to her and she agrees to fund their treasure hunt with the only proviso that they pay her back when (and, of course, if) they find the treasure.

This narrative remarkably resembles a possible scenario of an independent filmmaker trying to scrape together enough funds to finance an early film. Having scraped together what little of their own money they can by selling off assets and borrowing from family, which both Schroeter and Fassbinder are known to have done, and unable to satisfy the requirements of commercial feasibility, the filmmaker will turn to the Film Subsidy Board. However, without enough experience or a ‘qualification’ such as a *Referenzfilm*, government funding is beyond their reach. The somewhat utopian ending of the film (uncharacteristically optimistic for

Fassbinder) resembles the role played briefly by the *Kuratorium junger deutscher Film* loaning money for a first film, with the loan to be paid back only when and if it recouped any of the production costs at the box office – even if, as I read Fassbinder to be suggesting, that is as improbable as finding buried treasure in Peru!

Fassbinder's film, made three years after the drafting of the Film Subsidy Bill and before its first amendment in 1971, assuredly engages in criticizing the very conditions under which it was made. Despite its optimistic ending, the film reads as a lament for the short life of the *Kuratorium* and its diminution under the Film Subsidy Bill of 1967. It also illustrates the hurdles faced by young inexperienced film-makers not only in the private sector, but also in the public sector where funding is dealt out primarily on the basis of reputation, usually acquired only through existing evidence of financial and/or critical success. Schroeter once mused at the thought of finding his own Frau Martinsen. In an interview he said, "one needs to find a patron, a fat old millionairess."⁶⁷

The critical element exhibited by Fassbinder in *Rio das Mortes* not only indicates the necessity of recognizing the merits of a cinema not purely geared toward financial gain, but it also functions as a measure for the need to recognize in the cinema, as is recognized in the other arts, a medium for the expression of a diverse range of human experience. Both Fassbinder, through his characters Günther and Michael in *Rio das Mortes*, and Alexander Kluge, through his writings and films, see the cinema as a means of awakening a spectator's capacity for imaginative thought. While for Fassbinder this is expressed in Günther and Michael's 'impossible' dream of finding buried treasure in Peru, Kluge articulates it in more philosophical terms as the diminishing human capacity for 'phantasy'. Kluge says, "phantasy is a capacity that is universally employed. Everyone uses phantasy. But the proportions, i.e. in what measure we make use of it, are beyond social control."⁶⁸ What he has called in a different context, the "industrialization of consciousness",⁶⁹ plays a part in the diminution of the role of phantasy in society. Kluge advocates that "in addition to language, which is public, the public sphere should grant phantasy the status of a communal medium, and this includes the stream of associations and the faculty of memory (the two main avenues of phantasy)."⁷⁰ I believe that Schroeter's films do just this; that is, draw out and work on our capacity for phantasy.

Counter-Cinema

The public sphere, however, may not be altered so easily. What is required, according to Kluge, is the formation of an oppositional or counter-public sphere, a 'Gegenöffentlichkeit'. He defines the term as "a type of public sphere which is changing and expanding, increasing the possibilities for a public articulation of experience."

⁷¹ A counter-public sphere would not sit outside of the existing public sphere but rather would set itself up as a radical force within the dominant public sphere. In a similar way, a counter-cinema is a cinema that attempts to change, expand and increase the possibilities of expression in the cinema with the hope of also changing the public's expectations about films. A counter-cinema could very well form a vital part of an oppositional public sphere.

The New German Cinema, just like the Weimar cinema of so many years before, must be thought of as a counter-cinema. In the case of the Weimar cinema, it was a counter-cinema “conceived in conscious opposition not only to Hollywood (or more accurately, the swamping of the European market prior to World War I by French Films), but also in opposition to the burgeoning mass commercial film production in Germany itself.”⁷² In both cases a need to differentiate the new cinema from the old was identified. In the case of the Weimar cinema the move was towards raising the status of the cinema to that of ‘high art’: “Paul Wegner, Hans Heinz Ewers, Robert Weine, Murnau and Lang saw themselves very much as part of an offensive to make the cinema respectable for bourgeois audiences and to give it the status of high art,” writes Elsaesser.⁷³ In the case of the New German Cinema it was less a matter of proving that cinema could be art than of shifting the place cinema had come to occupy in the West German public sphere since the Second World War. This was done via a shift from industry to culture and through the involvement of film-makers themselves in attempting to alter the conditions under which films could be made.

It is in respect of this desire on the part of film-makers such as Kluge, Fassbinder or Herzog to bring a counter-cinema into being that the theory and practice of Bertolt Brecht in theatre can be seen as setting a precedent. Assessing Brecht’s influence on New German Cinema, Elsaesser has written: “In West Germany, virtually every director of the so-called New German Cinema makes reference to Brecht, either as a source to be acknowledged or a cultural presence to come to terms with.”⁷⁴ But beyond literal references or appropriations of Brechtian aesthetics and strategies such as interruption or distanciation (the *Verfremdungseffekt*), Brecht was an important progenitor for the New German Cinema for more practical reasons. As Elsaesser comments: “Intervening in the apparatus and not merely supplying it with a product became one of the most Brechtian aspects of the New German Cinema.”⁷⁵

If the New German Cinema was a counter-cinema, aiming to push the boundaries of cinema to its limits, the cinema of Werner Schroeter could be said to form something of a ‘counter counter-cinema’. Not only does Schroeter oppose, as did the New German Filmmakers, the industrial mode of production, but he also stands at arms length from the cultural mode of production upon which the New German Cinema was – not uncritically – built. It is one thing to create the conditions under which the films of a counter-cinema may be produced. It is yet another to find a viewing public for them. As with the means of production, a corresponding mode of reception had to be put into place and nurtured.

A Cultural Mode of Reception: The Film-maker as Autor

As an integral part of their call for new formal, economic, and intellectual conceptions to become the guiding force of a new cinema, the Oberhausenerers hoped that with the new film would come a renewal of the intellectual conception of the cinema in Germany. Indeed the development of a new film culture entailed not only a rethinking of the means and methods of production but also of education and, above all, of reception. This, which could be called a “cultural mode of reception”, is a necessary and complementary adjunct to the “cultural mode of

production". What I mean by "mode of reception" in terms of the cinema relates to the various places held by films in the public sphere, as well as the routes they take in order to get there. In the case of the commercially oriented entertainment film, which formed part of what Adorno and Horkheimer called the "culture industry",⁷⁶ it is primarily through the mechanisms of commerce – the possibility for financial return to the producer, distributor and exhibitor – and marketing – including the promotion of the 'star value' of particular actors – by which such films enter into and circulate within the market as commodities.

Without a public to appreciate their films, the new film-makers would fail to achieve their aim of bringing a new film culture into being. This would require a dramatic shift in the place already occupied by the cinema in the public sphere, or at least the creation of a new place and role for the new cinema that could co-exist separately from the commercial one.

By the 1960s the notion of 'art cinema' was already well established in France, Italy and throughout most of Europe. In Germany, however, it was virtually non-existent. Similarly, the figure of the *Auteur* had become an important presence in the cinemas of France and Italy, as well as in Hollywood, and the term had made its way into film theory and criticism where it was used to link particular stylistic characteristics with an individual director. In Germany, the term *Autor* (literally meaning 'author') took on particular importance for the New German Cinema. It referred not only to the director as an artist and the "creator of personal works", but also to the idea of "the filmmaker as author in the legal sense" as the owner of artistic and intellectual property.⁷⁷ In addition, continues Elsaesser:

Autoren, in order to be able to make films[...]first had to create the conditions for making them. The authors' film [*Autorenfilm*] is thus tied indissolubly to the authors' policy: the cultural-political demand for recognition and subsidy. Film aesthetics often became indistinguishable from film politics.⁷⁸

The above statement is evidenced most succinctly by Fassbinder's *Rio das Mortes*. In contrast to the German *Autor*, the "art cinema auteur" outside of Germany "worked within a broad cultural consensus and for an identifiable public."⁷⁹ The contradictions between independence and subsidy that marked the cultural mode of production similarly stood in the way of reception. Often film critics and the State stood in place of 'real' spectatorial demands. Elsaesser advances the hypothesis that the films of the New German Cinema "imply a continuing anxiety about audiences, and can only be understood against the internalised and exterior pressures coming from a pervasive 'legitimation gap' affecting a cinema sponsored by the state and not supported by the mass public."⁸⁰ Without a ready-made audience and without the means by which to secure one through the difficulty of finding distributors for their films, exhibition took place largely in cultural institutions, community theatres (*Kommunale Kino*), and film festivals. 'Reception', in place of wider public opinion, took place in film journals and on the arts pages of newspapers. As Reinhard Hauff once remarked: "On the arts pages we are strong, in the film industry we are marginal figures."⁸¹

The Critical Reception of Schroeter's Films

Indeed, while Schroeter remains a marginal figure within the German film industry, Schroeter's films have elicited substantial attention in the arts pages of newspapers as well as in the German film journal *Filmkritik*. From as early as 1969 almost all of Schroeter's films have been reviewed in German newspapers, including some of the Federal Republic's major papers such as *Die Zeit*, *Die Welt*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the southern newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. It is here, in the critical literature, where the theoretical reception of Schroeter's films begins, albeit in a rather haphazard and fragmentary way. While a fair share of the reviewers appear baffled or simply frustrated by Schroeter's episodically structured films and lack of linear plots, many do in fact provide the reader with a catalogue of affects produced by the films. Authors such as Sebastian Feldman, Urs Jeny, Paul B. Kleiser, Christiane Peitz, Ekkehard Pluta, Wolfram Schütte, Frank Scuria, Wilfried Wiegand and Karsten Witte in Germany, as well as Gérard Courant in France, have all offered thoughtful contributions to the study of Schroeter's films.⁸² His work has also come to the attention of prominent French philosophers, including Michel Foucault who greatly admired *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* and Gilles Deleuze, who Schroeter considered to be a close friend.⁸³ Among the pages of this accumulated work lie many of the concerns that will be taken up in the remainder of this book.

These include Schroeter's use of radically fragmentary narrative structures, repetition, a-synchronized sound, tableau compositions, and complex temporal layering. Most discuss Schroeter's tendency to break down the distinctions between high art and popular culture, his treatment of characters not psychologically but as figures or stereotypes, and the importance of emphatic and repetitive gestures. Schroeter's connection to traditions of opera and theatre are also well documented, as are the recurrent themes of love, death, *Sehnsucht* (longing/yearning) and *Leidenschaft* (passionate suffering). Many of these elements, as we shall see in the following chapters are aspects of an allegorical mode of expression, which I believe Schroeter's films collectively develop.

Of course, not all articles engage intellectually with Schroeter's films and it is also here that the immense difficulty Schroeter has had finding audiences for his films is most clearly demonstrated. Many of the articles represent quite extreme reactions to the films and in doing so help to reveal the gap between the commercial cinema and the new cinema that was evolving out of the spirit of Oberhausen. One such article, published in the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung* following a two-day festival of Schroeter's films at the Ruhrfestspielhaus in March 1971, sums up a range of diverse reactions to his films. The unnamed author begins the article by saying: "Some call him the cultural critic of the West German cinema scene, others think him 'quite crazy,' Dr. Eva M. J. Schmid describes him enthusiastically as the genius of the German cinema."⁸⁴ The article's author, however, clearly does not agree with Frau Doktor Schmid. He/she makes no attempt to hide an utter distaste for the style and content of the films and launches a personal attack on Schroeter for his eccentric behaviour during the event (dancing a tango with a wine bottle in his hand). Schroeter's films, says this writer, "thrust the general public into hopeless

bewilderment." The journalist focuses on those in the audience who would prefer to get up and walk out rather than on those who actually might have appreciated the films. What the author fails to recognize is that the films were not necessarily made for the general public and in this failure it also demonstrates the very difficulty of finding an audience for films that do not present themselves as pure entertainment.

While the abovementioned article is not exactly an exception, neither is it the rule. It is perhaps a confirmation of the aims and at least partial success of the Oberhausen Manifesto that the majority of newspaper articles on Schroeter's films consider them from an intellectual point of view. Especially in the case of Schroeter's early films up to his first commercially released film *Regno di Napoli*, it is largely these critics, alongside film festival audiences, who constituted Schroeter's earliest viewers. In the spirit of Oberhausen these critics therefore served a dual function. On the one hand they constituted the kind of intellectual audience required by the new film and on the other hand they helped to create a public sphere for these films through the very public institution of the daily newspaper.

Many of the articles, including the one cited above from the *Recklinghäuser Zeitung*, focus upon the way Schroeter's films manage to dismantle the various institutions of high culture such as the theatre, the opera and even Christian rituals, and allows them to be infiltrated by elements of so-called low or popular culture such as pop music, the grotesque and the kitsch qualities of carnival. While, as I have shown, Schroeter produces on the very margins of the cultural mode of production, as he himself has said, this does not prevent him from being just as "embroiled in 'Kultur'" as those who produce at the very centre of it. In saying this, Schroeter demonstrates that he is acutely aware of the limitations of becoming a state-patronized artist as he is of the tradition of the artist as the producer, preserver and conveyor of culture as it had come to be defined during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century under the influence of Romanticism.

Schroeter, Culture and Romanticism

The phrase "embroiled in 'Kultur'", apart from its reference to the notion of a cultural mode of film production, also summons up a much wider range of connotations in respect to a particularly German Romantic tradition of artistic production. Thomas Elsaesser has placed the work of Schroeter among others, within the context of a revival of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century tradition of Romanticism. Although Elsaesser places Schroeter within what he calls a "neo-romantic tendency", or "sensibilist" tradition, within the New German Cinema along with the diverse names of Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg and Herbert Achternbusch, he does so quite rightly less in terms of the aesthetics and motifs of Romanticism as a thematic and stylistic tradition than in respect of a militant anti-capitalism that self-consciously attempted to expose "the contradictions of their situation." These contradictions were similar to those faced by the Romantics who responded to the threat posed by the increasing industrialization of society.⁸⁵ In positing such a return to Romanticism on a *critical* rather than an artistic level, Elsaesser continues a long-standing argument with the generalizations made by Lotte

Eisner and Siegfried Kracauer for the Weimar Cinema of the 1920s. Rather than arguing, as Eisner did, that “the German cinema [of the 1920s] is a *development* of German Romanticism”⁸⁶ or that a “homology” can be drawn “between German cinema and German history on which [Kracauer’s] thesis rests”,⁸⁷ Elsaesser makes no such claims for a cyclical movement from period to period. On the contrary, the contradictions faced by these film-makers in the second half of the twentieth century have less to do with the grand struggles between man and machine or inhuman social mechanisms, which may or may not be rendered visibly in the form of monsters, spectres or phantoms as was argued for the Weimar cinema, than with the very specific medium of the cinema itself.

While I agree with Elsaesser when he says that film-makers such as Schroeter were fighting for the “right interpretation of the Romantic legacy in German history”,⁸⁸ I believe that such interpretation is also a somewhat critical activity. It is not possible simply to conclude, therefore, that he is merely a proponent of a so-called “neo-romantic tendency”. Turning Elsaesser’s argument upon itself at this point it is possible to see the films of Werner Schroeter not as a manifestation of a nationalistic search for cultural identity through a historically determined and highly saturated, encoded and somewhat essentialist reversion to Romantic ideals and motifs, but, on the contrary, and as Elsaesser himself argues in general for the New German Cinema, as very much an *interpretation* and deconstruction of that legacy, especially as it was adopted in the State-defined conception of culture. Schroeter, in his attempt to break down the distinctions between high art and popular culture throughout his films, effectively works to break down the cult of the artist that Romanticism gave birth to.

Elsaesser’s term *interpretation* is crucial here for rather than suggesting a simple return to the ideas and ideals of a former age, it suggests that the old might be written over with new ideas and ideals and that new layers of signification might be discovered. Through his deployment of a range of Romantic motifs such as music, images, literary quotations and the recurrent motif of *Sehnsucht* (longing or desire for something unattainable, a notion arising quite specifically out of the age of German Romanticism), Schroeter could be said to be working within a Romantic idiom. At the same time, however, this can be read more as an act of quotation and interpretation than as a simple (romantic) return to the dreams and hopes of a past age. Schroeter continually deploys strategies of pastiche and parody more familiar both to the idioms of camp and postmodernism that undermine any possibility of fully immersing the viewer in a truly neo-Romantic experience. It seems to me that Schroeter is an allegorist, for he captures mere fragments of those dreams and hopes of a past age in a state of irreparable decay. It is out of the remnants of ‘Kultur’ that Schroeter’s films are made, and it is this concern for all that is fragmentary, withered and dying that defines his cinematic practice as an allegorical mode particularly appropriate to his own age. It is, therefore, to the complex notion of allegory suggested by Schroeter’s films themselves that I shall turn in my next chapter.

Notes

1. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 204.
2. Rainer Werner Fassbinder, "Chin-up, Handstand, Salto Mortale – Firm Footing: On the Film Director Werner Schroeter, Who Achieved What Few Achieve, with *Kingdom of Naples*," in Michael Töteberg and Leo A. Lensing eds., *The Anarchy of the Imagination: Interviews, Essays, Notes*, trans., Krishna Winston, (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 101. Fassbinder's article was first published in *Frankfurter Rundschau* (24 February, 1979).
3. Timothy Corrigan, "On the Edge of History: The Radiant Spectacle of Werner Schroeter," *Film Quarterly*, v. 37 (summer 1984), 8.
4. Hans Günter Pflaum & Hans Helmut Prinzler, *Film in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979), 260.
5. Schroeter in interview with Roland Keller, "Freiheit, die ich meine: Werner Schroeter korrigiert Klischees und zerschlägt Feindbilder," *Kino*, n. 4 (1980), np. Translations of German texts are my own unless otherwise indicated.
6. Conversation with Werner Schroeter, Berlin, (14 April, 2005).
7. This book shall be restricted to a discussion of Schroeter's films. For a more detailed discussion of Schroeter's work in theatre see Sabina Dhein, *Werner Schroeter* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991).
8. Sebastian Feldmann in Jansen & Schütte, eds., *Werner Schroeter*, (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1980), 168.
9. Conversation with Werner Schroeter, Berlin, (14 April, 2005).
10. Margarete & Thomas Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behaviour* (New York: Grove Press, 1975). Their book was first published in Germany in 1967.
11. Ulrike Sieglohr, *Imaginary Identities in Werner Schroeter's Cinema: An Institutional, Theoretical and Cultural Investigation*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of East Anglia, September, 1994), 275. Emphasis added.
12. Schroeter's first theatrical production was *Emilia Galotti* staged at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg in 1972. The following year, he directed *Salome* for the stage in Bochum, this time with Magdalena Montezuma in the role of John the Baptist. See Sabina Dhein, *Werner Schroeter*, 112-121.
13. Such views through windows and other apertures frequently appear in Schroeter's films. Such shots create spaces or gaps in the film that encourage the spectator to enter into a contemplative mode. These shots are reminiscent of the 'pillow shots' in Ozu's films.
14. Karsten Witte, "So viele Lieder," *Die Zeit* (23 January, 1987), 51.
15. For a summary of the various perspectives see Dorothee Römhild, "Von kritischer Selbstreflexion zur stereotypen Frauendarstellung: Ingeborg Bachmanns Roman *Malina* und seine filmische Rezeption," *The Germanic Review* v. LXVIII, n. 4 (fall, 1993). The film was much more warmly received in France where the novel was less widely known. See, for example, Frederic Strauss, "Scènes de la passion (Making *Malina*)" *Cahiers du cinéma*, n. 435 (September 1990). This is possibly also due to the presence of Isabelle Huppert in the leading role.
16. Although the film was received well in France, the reception of the film in Germany was limited due to the fact that a planned German dub of the film was never made due to financial restraints. According to Schroeter, this dub was crucial for conveying the full meaning of the film to a German-speaking audience. Schroeter said that he made the original French version with a series of subtle differentiations in vocal intonation that are crucial for grasping the full significance of the film. Conversation with Schroeter, Berlin, 14 April 2005.
17. Michel Foucault, "Conversation with Werner Schroeter," *Foucault Live: Interviews 1961-1984*, S. Lotringer (ed.), (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 313. They are discussing *The Death of Maria Malibran*.
18. Roland Barthes, "The Romantic Song," *Responsibility of Forms* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

19. The Oberhausen Manifesto was written and signed at the annual Oberhausen short film festival on 28 February 1962. The 26 signatories called for new economic, formal and intellectual conceptions of film production. For an English translation of the Manifesto see Eric Rentschler ed., *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (New York & London: Holmes & Meyer, 1988), 2.
20. There is some discrepancy in the literature regarding the formation date of the *Kuratorium*. Elsaesser's book puts it at 1967, however, I believe this to be a typographical error. Pflaum and Prinzler's book puts the date at 1964 and Sheila Johnston in her article "The Author as Public Institution: The 'New' Cinema in the Federal Republic of Germany," *Screen Education* n. 32/33 (autumn/winter 1979), and Timothy Corrigan, *New German Film*, 3, both give the establishment date of 1965.
21. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 22.
22. Ibid 25.
23. Werner Schroeter, in Bronnen and Brocher, *Die Filmemacher*, 164-165.
24. (The Sailors of the World) Schroeter published a treatment for the film in *Filmkritik*, n. 186, (June 1972). It is a love story between two sailors who meet on an American warship. As Schroeter writes, "the film describes the acquaintance, the love, the extreme stations visited by these two extraordinarily happy young men." His mention of "stations," which has biblical connotations, is, along with the notion of *Leidenschaft* or 'passion', a recurring theme throughout his films.
25. Ibid, 164.
26. Eric Franck in Gérard Courant, ed., *Werner Schroeter* (Paris: Goethe Institut & La Cinemathèque Française, 1982). (translation from the French my own). Unfortunately, I have been unable to see this film myself. It is rarely mentioned in the literature on Schroeter's work.
27. Pflaum & Prinzler, 105-6.
28. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 19-20
29. Elsaesser writes: "With a deteriorating market, entertainment tax was greatly reduced and the FBW's function dwindled accordingly." Ibid.
30. Ibid., 29.
31. Elsaesser points out that while all German television stations at the time were public institutions, they were "autonomous in relation to the federal authorities," meaning that a filmmaker gaining funding from television could work without many of the restraints imposed upon those with government grants and subsidies. *New German Cinema*, 32-33.
32. Ibid., 204.
33. His 1990 film *Malina* was his first project substantially financed by private enterprise. Schroeter was contracted to make the film by Kuchenreuther, a Bavarian-based film production and distribution company, and it is distributed commercially by RCA/Columbia Pictures. It also notably won the German Film Prize in 1991.
34. Taking into consideration the fact that Schroeter is also a prolific theatre and opera director with no less than 40 productions to his name, 42 films (including shorts) over a 31-year period is indeed rather prolific.
35. Sheila Johnston, "The Radical Film Funding of ZDF: An Introduction to an interview with Eckhart Stein of ZDF German Television," *Screen*, v. 23 n. 1 (May/June 1982), 60.
36. Ibid.
37. This is stated in article 5 of the Basic Law. This article requires that broadcasting "should be surrendered neither to the state nor to any one group in society. The promoters of broadcasting programmes must, therefore, be so organised that all relevant forces have an influence in the organs of control and a fair hearing in the overall programme, and that binding principles apply to the content of the overall programme which guarantee a minimum balance in content, impartiality and mutual respect." Not only should this apply to news and current

- affairs programmes, for, the court declared that all broadcasts, including fictional and cultural programmes were not merely a "medium" for the formation of public opinion, but an instrumental "factor" in the formation of such opinions. "Programming policy for all programmes, whether fact or fiction," therefore "had to demonstrate a broad spread of political philosophies and to cover all aspects of human activity." Richard Collins and Vincent Porter, *WDR and the Arbeiterfilm: Fassbinder, Ziewer and Others* (London: BFI, 1981), 21-22.
38. Johnston, "The Radical Film Funding of ZDF," 61.
 39. Johnston's article was written in 1982 before the introduction of pay television in 1985. It is now necessary to make the distinction between free-to-air and pay TV channels. See Alexander Kluge in Stuart Liebmann, "On New German Cinema, Art, Enlightenment, and the Public Sphere: An Interview with Alexander Kluge" *October*, n.46 (1988), 30-34 for a discussion of how Kluge has worked to secure production funds and screen time on the satellite channel SAT 1 for independent film-makers.
 40. For a detailed discussion of the structures of German regional television boards and the reflection of the partisan political powers of their respective region in these boards and hence the programming decisions they make, see Collins & Porter, *WDR and the Arbeiterfilm*, esp. chapter 1, "The Political Context" 7-15.
 41. Johnston, "The Radical Film Funding of ZDF," 61.
 42. *Ibid.*
 43. *Ibid.*
 44. *Ibid.*, 62.
 45. *Ibid.*, 63-73.
 46. *Ibid.*, 63
 47. *Ibid.*, 69.
 48. Stein comments: "Out of our 50 productions a year, there are about ten films of a more conventional nature, co-produced by the FFA...The other 35 are co-productions between us and the filmmakers." *Ibid.*, 69.
 49. *Ibid.*, 67.
 50. *Ibid.*
 51. Approximately eight or nine films between 1970 and 1985 with some being co-productions with ZDF and other television stations or institutions.
 52. Karsten Witte, "Versteckte Zeichen und Signale: Werner Schroeters Filme," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, (5 January 1991), ZB 3.
 53. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 28.
 54. *Ibid.*, 28 note 43.
 55. *Ibid.*, 28.
 56. *Ibid.*, 29 and note 52. And for a more general discussion of a film-maker's obligations to the State under the funding system see Sheila Johnston, "The Author as Public Institution," *Screen Education*, n. 32/33 (autumn/winter 1979), 67-78.
 57. *Ibid.*, 47.
 58. *Ibid.*, 47 note 42.
 59. Today this notion of national identity seems to have shifted towards 'international identity'. It is interesting to note the importance of commercial success outlined in the current application guidelines of the Nord Rhein-Westfalen Filmstiftung, who are increasingly funding films of successful international 'art-house' directors such as Ken Loach and Lars von Trier. The guidelines state: "German and international films that expect economic success at the box office will be supported." See http://www.filmstiftung.de/Foerderungen/Produktion/main_produktion.php. (accessed 30 May 2005) It is clear that the same friction between art and commerce in the German subsidy system persist today. On its website, the NRW Filmstiftung also promotes the use of locations and studio facilities within the state in an

- attempt to attract film-makers there. The guidelines state that preference is given to films that have some kind of relevance to the Nord Rhine-Westfalen region.
60. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 47.
 61. Indeed, one could read Werner Herzog's *Kaspar Hauser* as an allegory of this system of patronage. Throughout the film, Kaspar continually, although rather naively, calls into question the rationale of post-Enlightenment European society. He refuses to be turned into a cultural commodity to be 'exchanged' by a series of patrons.
 62. Alexander Kluge, "On Film and the Public Sphere," *New German Critique*, n. 24-25 (fall/winter 1981-2), 209-10.
 63. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 44.
 64. *Ibid.*, 43 note 19.
 65. Elsaesser observes, "the vast majority of German independent films seem at some level always concerned with justifying filmmaking not so much as a creative individual act, but as a critical activity involving issues of public accountability." *Ibid.*, 42.
 66. Borrowing money from family appears to have been common practice among young film-makers. Schroeter borrowed money from family and friends to finance his first films. See Schroeter's comments in Bronnen & Brocher, *Die Filmemacher*, 157.
 67. *Ibid.*, 164.
 68. Alexander Kluge, "On Film and the Public Sphere," 215.
 69. Alexander Kluge, "Why Should Film and Television Cooperate?" *October*, n. 46 (1988).
 70. Kluge, "On film and the Public Sphere," 215.
 71. *Ibid.*, 211.
 72. Thomas Elsaesser, "Social Mobility and the Fantastic: German Silent Cinema," in Mike Budd ed., *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari: Texts, Contexts, Histories* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 180.
 73. *Ibid.*
 74. Thomas Elsaesser, "From anti-illusionism to hyper-realism: Bertolt Brecht and Contemporary Film," in Pia Kleber & Colin Visser eds., *Re-interpreting Brecht: His Influence on Contemporary Drama and Film* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 171. While Schroeter is perhaps one of the less obviously Brechtian directors of the New German Cinema, as I shall argue later in this book, I believe that a reconsideration of Brecht's theory of *Gestus* is useful for understanding some aspects of Schroeter's practice.
 75. *Ibid.*, 176.
 76. Theodore Adorno & Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans., John Cumming (London: Verso, 1979).
 77. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 42.
 78. *Ibid.*
 79. *Ibid.*, 40.
 80. *Ibid.*, 41-42.
 81. Reinhard Hauff, quoted in Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 28.
 82. Most of these authors have each written several articles on Schroeter published in newspapers and film journals. A full list is contained in the bibliography. I am indebted to the archive at the Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film in Munich, which holds an extensive collection of newspaper clippings and reviews of Schroeter's films.
 83. Schroeter told me of his friendship with Deleuze in conversation (Berlin, 14/04/05). This surprised me somewhat since his films are barely mentioned in Deleuze's cinema books. Schroeter is, however, mentioned briefly by Deleuze in *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 114-115. See also Michel Foucault "Sade, ein Sergeant des Sex: Interview mit Gérard Dupont," *Von der Freundschaft: Michel Foucault in Gespräch*, trans., Marianne Karbe & Walter Seitter (Berlin: Merve Verlag, 1985) and

"Conversation with Werner Schroeter," *Foucault Live: Interviews 1961–1984*, S. Lotringer (ed.), (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996).

84. *Recklinghäuser Zeitung*, n. 74, (Monday, 29 March 1971), np.

85. Elsaesser writes: "Despite denying an affiliation with art as it might have become ritualised in visits to the opera or the concert hall, Kluge and Schroeter, along with other German directors, none the less place themselves in a recognisably German tradition – that of Romantic anti-capitalism – and their claims and counter-claims to cultural legitimacy and representation invariably also involved taking a stand in the fight for the right interpretation of the Romantic legacy in German history," *New German Cinema*, 48.

86. Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen* (University of California Press, 1965), 113. Emphasis added.

87. Elsaesser in reference to Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler*, in "Social Mobility and the Fantastic," 173.

88. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 48.

Chapter Two

Towards a Theory of Cinematic Allegory

As I was nearing completion of this book, I finally had the opportunity to meet Werner Schroeter in person for the first time in Berlin in April 2005. Upon meeting in a quaint little bistro in Charlottenburg, one of the first questions he asked me was to explain what my book is about. Rather hesitantly, I replied, "I don't know if you'll agree, but I argue that your films are allegorical." To this, he responded with a theatrical flourish of his hand, "*but of course my films are allegorical!*"¹

Yes, *of course* Schroeter's films are allegorical! But such a statement does not say how or why they are so, nor does it say what allegorical cinema might look like. What specifically cinematic strategies might allegorical cinema employ and for what purposes? These are questions that I shall attempt to answer in this chapter as I develop a theoretical framework through which to discuss Schroeter's complex and highly idiosyncratic cinematic practice. In doing so, I hope to also develop a theory of allegory specific to the cinema that may help to bring a serious film-theoretical perspective to a somewhat under-theorized mode of cinematic production.² I shall do this through a process of conceptual montage, by bringing Werner Schroeter's filmic practice into productive contact with the work of Walter Benjamin and Gilles Deleuze. In his book, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Walter Benjamin was to develop one of most detailed theories of allegory ever written, and many of the ideas developed there re-appear scattered, in true allegorical fashion, throughout his writings on modernity. Most importantly, however, for the theory of allegorical cinema I wish to develop in this book, they intersect very closely with some of his writings on cinema, which may be considered a medium well suited to the allegorical mode of expression. This suitability of film to an allegorical mode of expression may be further elucidated with recourse to Gilles Deleuze's work on the cinema. I shall demonstrate that while Deleuze does not theorize allegorical cinema specifically, there are certain aspects of his conceptualization of time-image cinema that may help us to understand the intricate workings of Schroeter's allegorical practice. In this chapter, I shall demonstrate not only that Schroeter works within an aesthetic and conceptual

mode that is decidedly allegorical, but that this allegorical mode must be seen in the context of a wider historical and conceptual shift in cinematic production that took place initially, according to Deleuze, in the wake of the Second World War. I will argue that the conditions that enabled the time-image to emerge also produced a very specific kind of time-image, what I am calling an “allegorical-image”. It is precisely this kind of image that Schroeter’s films produce, and, while Schroeter could be said to be one of the most radical of allegorical film-makers, his work may be profitably located in the context of a more general cinematic turn to allegory in the late twentieth century.

Deux

Before I move on to locate this ‘turn’ and develop this theory in more detail, however, let’s begin with an example of Schroeter’s allegorical practice. The opening credit sequence of Schroeter’s 2002 film *Deux* begins with a montage of highly disjointed images that seem to have no apparent connection with one another. The film opens with a black screen. Our senses are awakened by the sound of footsteps on a wooden floor. In blue lettering we see the words “Paulo Branco et Ulrich Felsberg présentent” then “Isabelle Huppert dans DEUX.” The first image is a shot of Isabelle Huppert sitting in a room with a wooden floor looking at a post card. We can almost make out the image, a scenic view of a castle perhaps? Then, another shot of Huppert also holding a postcard, this time in a child’s bedroom asking a woman who we later discover to be her adoptive ‘mother’ if she knows another ‘Magdalena’. “No, you are the only Magdalena,” she replies. Huppert’s voice and gestures seem somewhat infantile. Music begins: the familiar voice of Conchita Supervia³ sings “les cadre rondinelle” from Ambroise Thomas’ opera *Mignon*. Then a series of still images: a black and white portrait of a man; a watercolour painting of a castle; a canted shot of an empty baby’s cot; a childish crayon drawing pinned to a wall; a shot of a typically Portuguese blue and white tile mosaic depicting the Madonna with a halo and flowing robes surrounded by a decorative baroque border; a close-up still of a man holding a red rose in front of him; a shot of a baby doll covered in what appears to be red paint or blood suspended from a tree; then another, similar baby doll. The music continues. Supervia is now accompanied by a male voice, they sing a duet as the camera pans across the ramparts of a castle at sunset. The image, which almost resembles a Romantic painting, is toned with a bluish hue, the sky filled with billowing clouds through which rays of the dying sunlight break. The image evokes the feeling of the sublime, the unknowable so cherished by the Romantics of the eighteenth century. But this is no romance! Cut to an image of Bulle Ogier dressed in a bright red suit lying on the ground, arms spread. The stark contrast of images is abrupt and startles the eye with the ‘shock’ of moving from pale blue in the previous image to red. Next, a close-up of Ogier’s face in the same location, her eyes gesture screen right, heralding the next shot where we see Ogier again, this time dressed in blue on a beach, her hair and clothes blowing in the wind, and echoing but also contrasting the sublime beauty of the scene of the castle, the mighty waves pound the shore; cut back to the shot of the castle ramparts, the camera’s gentle pan continuing from where it left off. Cut back to Ogier on the beach, the waves crash on relentlessly; a shot further out into the ocean where the water swells;

cut back to Ogier, this time in profile. She is holding some papers that she scatters upon the wind. As she does so a voice over begins: "To my dear Maria and Magdalena. Time and distance oblige me to do what I've never done before, not even in difficult times. I must write to you..." As the voice-over continues, she sits on the beach and as her voice-over signs off the letter with "Kisses to you both," she delicately sweeps the sand from left to right with her fingers and then the film cuts to another hand performing a similar gesture, but this time from right to left, and this time wiping sand from what appears to be a mirror or a pane of glass to reveal the face of Isabelle Huppert, her eyes open, blinking as if startled by the sunlight. Faintly we can still hear the Supervia duet, but this is now accompanied by the faint sound of church bells as the voice-over signs off "Your mother Anna". This beautiful, tactile rhyming gesture of hands brushing through sand seems to connect three people (Ogier, Huppert's face and the hand that performs the second gesture), across the cut, yet it also seems to place a great distance between them. They are connected yet disparate, as we do not see the face of the person who performs the second gesture. Although the credits continue, this gesture and the face of Huppert seem to frame this sequence, as does the fact that the Supervia duet comes to an end. I will take my cue from the music and make an arbitrary break in the flow of images at this point to embark upon my promised task of developing a theory of allegorical cinema.

Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory is based on a number of structural and conceptual elements including: the privileging of the fragment, the ruin and processes of decay; the destruction or subversion of hierarchies; and the tendency to draw attention to the mode of construction being used, giving it a self-consciously constructed quality. For Benjamin, allegories are also inherently dialectical, not only for the fact that they may present two or more opposing views by appearing to say one thing (on a literal level), while in fact saying something quite different (on a figural level). They are also dialectical because they have the capacity to sustain a complex relationship between conflicting temporalities. Allegorical works also tend to contain a cast of allegorical figures, frequently 'afflicted' by melancholy, who embody an "allegorical intention" or "way of seeing" unique to this mode of expression. Furthermore, this way of seeing refers not only to characters within the allegory, but also to the allegorist and the viewer/reader, who may also be afflicted by an allegorical perspective. Similarly, for Deleuze, the cinema of the time-image offered new ways of seeing in a world that (due largely to the Second World War) had been subject to processes of fragmentation, destruction and decay. Like allegory, time-image cinema emerges out of the rubble and in doing so generates the capacity for cinema to take on an explicitly allegorical function. Its major features include, according to Deleuze, *"the dispersive situation, the deliberately weak links, the voyage form, the consciousness of clichés, the condemnation of the plot,"*⁴ all of which coincide very closely with many of Benjamin's thoughts on allegory. This is not to say that time-image cinema is necessarily allegorical, but that with its emergence, the conditions are created for allegorical cinema to establish itself as a specific kind of time-image, or what I have elected to call an "allegorical-image".

The Fragment

For Benjamin, the fragment is the most defining feature of allegory. The fragment, along with the ruin, the relic, the commodity and the processes of “irresistible decay”,⁵ provides the structure, process and substance of allegorical works in the baroque age as well as in modernity. As Benjamin has written: “That which lies here in ruins, the highly significant fragment, the remnant, is, in fact, the finest material in baroque creation.”⁶ The process of fragmentation serves to dislocate and decontextualize elements from the social, cultural and natural worlds and in doing so dislodges these elements from ‘traditional’ or conventional meanings, thereby preparing them for “emblematic purposes.”⁷ Benjamin writes:

That which is touched by the allegorical intention is torn from the context of life’s interconnections: it is simultaneously shattered and conserved. Allegory attaches itself to the rubble.⁸

Benjamin highlights the violent and destructive nature of this process of decontextualization through his use of the German word “*betroffen*”,⁹ translated here as ‘touched’. *Betroffen* can, however, imply a much more powerful force at work. It can variously mean that which has been “affected”, “afflicted”, “stricken”, or even “shocked”. The “allegorical intention” is therefore described as a powerful force that can intercept and disrupt the usual organic relations between things. For Benjamin, the cinema could serve as just such a device of destructive fragmentation and, indeed, in “Central Park” he locates the emergence of allegory in modernity as a result of “technical developments”.¹⁰ He writes: “the introduction of allegory is to be derived from the situation of art as determined by technical developments.” Such developments must, of course, include film, particularly for the way that film offered a new perspective on the world. In fact, writing explicitly about film in his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, Benjamin hints even further at the allegorical potential of film:

Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appear to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go travelling.¹¹

This is one point among several in this essay where Benjamin refers to the potential for film to assume a ‘destructive’ role, but a destructive role that is also somewhat redemptive. Film has the ability to cut through the habit-forming mechanisms of modern life and awaken our capacity for genuine ‘experience’ (*Erfahrung*).¹² This capacity, according to Benjamin has been eroded by the rise of mass production and the increased tendency for people to put up defences against the ‘shocks’ to which modern life exposes us. Film, for Benjamin, assumes a dialectical function in modern life, for, like allegory, it possesses simultaneously the capacity for destruction and redemption. It at once contributes to the mass production of images, and its thrills and spills help to close off our capacity for *Erfahrung*, but, at the same time, film has

the capacity to open us up to unique modes of experience. As Benjamin said of allegory, that which is shattered is at the same time conserved. Writing about Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Miriam Hansen states:

In this context, Benjamin emphasises the fragmenting, destructive, *allegorizing* effect of cinematic devices, their tendency to cut through the tissue of reality like a surgical instrument.¹³

Benjamin writes of the camera's ability to present both familiar qualities of movement as well as to reveal previously unknown ones and in doing so remarks upon its ability to make the familiar radically unfamiliar: "Even if one has a general knowledge of the way people walk, one knows nothing of a person's posture during the fractional second of a stride."¹⁴ The camera is now able to intervene, and it does so with the same "disjunctive, atomising principle of the allegorical approach" that we found in the *Traverspiel* of the seventeenth century.¹⁵ Benjamin continues: "The camera intervenes with the resources of its lowerings and liftings, its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargements and reductions."¹⁶ The film camera literally introduces the possibility of a new way of seeing, the possibility of gaining a new perspective on the modern world, just as allegory offered new ways of seeing in the baroque age. While the world around the modern subject seemed to be speeding up at an accelerated rate, film had the capacity to break up this world into a virtually infinite number of new perspectives.

At their most fundamental level, Schroeter's films also proceed according to this logic of the fragment and he fully utilizes the "atomising" potential common to both allegory and film. In fact the highly fragmentary structure of his films can lead the viewer to experience such absolute bewilderment that they too seem to be affected, afflicted, stricken by the allegorical intention, no longer able to rely upon their knowledge of the codes and conventions of narrative cinema in order to decipher them. Under the allegorizing gaze of Schroeter's camera, the fragments of the familiar world suddenly become radically unfamiliar, yet strangely full of beauty and potential.

Fragmentation, furthermore, refers not only to the formal principles of allegory, but alters the usual processes of signification by dissolving and deferring the usual connections between sign and signified, image and referent. This is a result not only of allegory's destructive intention, but may be attributed to the processes of natural decay and dissipation also privileged by the mode. Benjamin writes: "word, syllable, and sound are emancipated from any context of traditional meaning and are flaunted as objects which can be exploited for allegorical purposes."¹⁷ This process of freeing meaning from semantic tradition is what enables allegory to speak a kind of 'other' or double discourse, for words, signs, and symbols can be made to mean their very opposite or to refer endlessly to something else. In effect, what results is a continual deferment of meaning. In fact, for Benjamin one of the most important properties of allegory is that "any person, any object, any relationship can mean

absolutely anything else.”¹⁸ It is through such a process of displacement of meaning that Benjamin differentiates allegory from symbol. A symbol is that which has its meaning fixed in a specific cultural or social context and understood by a similarly fixed set of conventions (as in scales symbolizing the concept of Justice). Allegory, by contrast, or more precisely an allegorical ‘emblem’, will always refer to an idea beyond its literal purpose or conventional meaning.¹⁹

Deux is dominated by this process of fragmentation and tends in true allegorical style to unfix meaning from images. Although the fragmentary structure of the film makes it almost impossible to narrate or extract from it a simple story, it is necessary to frame my discussion with an outline of the film and its three major characters. Bulle Ogier plays ‘Anna’, the mother of twins ‘Maria’ and ‘Magdalena’ (both played by Isabelle Huppert). Soon after their birth they were abandoned by their mother and were raised separately by adoptive parents without knowledge of each other and never knowing their mother or father, who may have been a sailor. Each twin seems to have destinies that are at once very different, but mirror one another in interesting ways. The primary distinction between them is that ‘Maria’ has a deep love of music, which she pursues variously via opera, cabaret and dance, while ‘Magdalena’ is depicted as a somewhat more melancholy, or distant figure who does not appear to be invested with the same degree of passion for music. At times she is highly practical, for example, telling her female lover that she does not love her and that she is tired of all the clichéd metaphors used to describe love such as “our love is as vast as the ocean.” She suggests that they simply say “we make love from 10-11pm.” She does, however, appear to have a deeper sense of loss in relation to her unknown mother and a beautiful but sad young man she meets in Marseilles in 1978, who commits suicide. As the film proceeds, however, it becomes more and more difficult to differentiate between the sisters, although, by the end of the film it is very clear who is who. The film has a very complex temporal structure, cutting randomly between the years 2000, 1955, 1977, 1963, 1993, 1981, 1984, 1971, 1978, 1985, 1962 and 1999, which are, however, almost never concretely stated in the film.²⁰ A series of rather prophetic ‘dream’ sequences are also dispersed throughout. Apart from this temporal dislocation, the film tends to disorient the viewer even further by also cutting between diverse locations in Marseilles, Sintra, Arles, Lisbon and Paris, our only clues being our own scraps of cultural memory of these places. Throughout the film, a male voice reads passages from Lautréamont’s *Chants de Maldoror* that, although not literally connected to the images, lend them a further fragmented and surreal quality and inflecting the images with even further layers of possible meaning. I shall proceed to examine the spatio-temporal elements of the film shortly, but for the moment, I shall look at how the film works allegorically with fragments and tends to displace meaning in a highly allegorical fashion.

The opening sequence of *Deux* described earlier provides a pertinent example of this process of fragmentation and semantic displacement. Choosing an image at random, I shall begin with the two successive shots of baby dolls covered in red paint/blood that are tied to a tree. It is not until approximately thirty minutes into the film that these objects recur, this time placed in the context of a dream sequence. A

group of sailors decorate a Christmas tree in a beachside location with a number of dolls that are coated in a shiny layer of gold paint. These dolls thus serve as bizarre Christmas ornaments. A few shots later, we are presented with a shot from Anna's point of view. She looks up into the tree and through her gaze we see the twin baby dolls strewn with blood. At this point meaning appears to split in at least two directions at once. Firstly, this somewhat surreal combination of elements, accompanied appropriately by a quotation from Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror*, tends to undermine any traditional meaning that might be signified by the Christmas tree. In their highly fabricated and fetishized 'kitschiness' the golden dolls hardly serve as conventional Christmas decorations, but in their difference from their bloodied counterparts, they do tend to heighten the bloodied doll's emblematic status. Attached to the tradition of Christmas, they are, of course, suggestive of the baby Jesus, but this is far from a conventional nativity scene, for, through blood, their associations with birth are written over by suggestions of death, crucifixion and martyrdom.²¹ They are on one level emblematic of the concept of martyrdom in a Christian context, but are also emblematic of a very specific kind of martyrdom circulating throughout and unique to Schroeter's oeuvre. They are highly reminiscent of scenes of martyrdom in many other of Schroeter's films, from *Eika Katappa*, where a Christ-like figure is lashed to a tree, to the highly emblematic evocation of St Sebastian in *Der Rosenkönig* or to the scenes of a passion play that interrupt the narrative progression and inflect the protagonist of *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* with a sense of melancholy and render him as a martyr for the many foreign guest workers

Deux 2002. © Werner Schroeter



who went to Germany in search of a better life. But the fact that the dolls are two and their image is tied to Ogier's point of view, the image refers us beyond the possibility of simply reading them as an emblematic representation of Christ's passion. They refer also to the film's twin female protagonists, who are in turn 'touched' by the allegorical intention and presented in a highly fragmentary and dislocated way. At this point the dream sequence (which is not linked to any specific character) takes on the character of a prophetic vision pointing perhaps to the fate of these characters.

This slippage from doll to human is not presented arbitrarily or accidentally in the film, but is facilitated by a number of other elements, which also involves the opposite process of making 'dolls' of human figures. For example, in a number of other dream sequences we see the twins dressed in identical floral 'baby doll' dresses enacting particularly childlike gestures, at one point they are mourning over their dead mother's body, one of the twins acting hysterically, the other calmly stroking her arm.

Significantly, these 'baby doll' dream sequences are some of the very few instances when the sisters either virtually or actually occupy the same space. In another of these 'baby doll' dream sequences, the twin girls occupy the same shot, yet they are virtually separated, framed in adjacent doorways and do not acknowledge one another's presence. One dances enthusiastically, the other sits motionless on a couch in a melancholy pose of apathy, eyes cast downward toward the floor. In yet another scene, the gold ornamental dolls are rendered human by two performance artists who, like the dolls, are coated in gold paint and form 'twin' 'living' statues.²² Significantly, like 'Maria' and 'Magdalena', they do not face one another. The film is full of such doubles, which are in turn 'doubled' by other doubles.

The baby dolls, may take us in yet another direction. As the twins names ('Maria' and 'Magdalena') suggest, there is further reference to the birth and death of Christ, yet this theme is further displaced from its sacred significance by the thematic dichotomy of 'virgin' and 'whore' that is also conjured by these names. In fact, throughout the film, the viewer's increasingly limited ability to distinguish between 'Maria' and 'Magdalena', brought about by the film's fragmented structure, overlapping stories and disjointed time frames, tends to make any such dichotomies collapse. 'Maria', traditionally, the 'virgin' is seen at various points in the film feeding a fox – a 'vixen' – but, in separate incidents, the fox ends up biting off 'Magdalena's' finger and then viciously attacking 'Maria'. At another point in the film, 'Maria' explains to the renowned cabaret artist Zazie de Paris that she has discovered Buddhism and renounced all the sins of the flesh. But the conversation takes place in a rather dark, seedy nightclub in Marsailles and eventually turns to the topic of sex as 'Maria' asks Zazie to make love to her, "just this once." Zazie responds: "...but you have many women to make love to." While this desire for sex might seem ironic in light of her Buddhist renunciation of all physical pleasures, this is one example of Schroeter's general tendency to collapse distinction between opposites. He makes no distinction between the affective assertions of spiritual devotion (of any faith) and the physical act of love.

'Magdalena' is similarly treated as an ambivalent figure, at times with a very literal connection to sex, as she is seen several times in consort with her lover Julia, who sings the words "fuck me, fuck me, darling fuck me...fuck me now." But, as I have already suggested, 'Magdalena' seems to take a very practical approach to sex. In another scene, however, 'Magdalena,' is figured as a rather naive innocent, full of the hopes and dreams of romantic love. One of the most powerful evocations of innocence in the film involves 'Magdalena' meeting a beautiful young man on a bicycle. This occurs in a brief scene where a beautiful young man on a bicycle meets her on the street and politely asks to accompany her home. He tells her passionately about a film he has seen (ironically called *Peine Capitale*)²³ about a beautiful blonde woman who is accused of her husband's murder and subsequently put to death. The film has apparently brought him to tears. Although taking place in 1978, the scene is treated with the naive innocence of a 1950s boy meets girl story. Such innocence is later cut through by the tragedy of the young man's suicide, which effectively cuts off the possibility of the romance being consummated, at once destroying it but maintaining it in a perpetual state of innocence. As with so many scenes in Schroeter's films this is an immanent image, containing within it the entire past, present and future of the character. The initial appearance of this young man contains hints of his eventual fate, for as he rides into the shot on his bicycle, our attention is drawn to a stream of tears running down his cheek. Such figures are a recurrent feature of Schroeter's cinema, and so here, this young man vividly provokes a range of inter-textual connections in the minds of those familiar with his work. He is representative of the archetypal melancholy figure of the 'sad young man' who has become a dominant allegorical stereotype in many of Schroeter's previous films. Such a figure tends to represent a form of intense passion or *Leidenschaft* that is far too great to bear (associated, of course, with the Passion of Christ, but not exclusively). Fate eventually plays her hand, resulting in the young man's death but inevitably ensuring his attainment of emblematic status.²⁴

But the 'meaning' elicited from this string of associations could take yet another path, they could in fact be said to 'touch' upon an element of real life, for 'Maria' and 'Magdalena' were also real-life muses for Schroeter figured by the now deceased personalities of Maria Callas and Magdalena Montezuma. At several points in the film, 'Maria' enthusiastically engages in singing lessons histrionically performing along with her singing teacher, Professor Barbez (Arielle Dombasle), and virtually losing all control of their gestures. As the film progresses, 'Maria'/'Magdalena' are brought into further constellations with their namesakes through the mediation of Huppert's body. At one point, mourning the death of the sad young man, 'Magdalena' begins to hum, "Ave Maria", and later she sings the hymn in full voice, echoed faintly by another recorded voice. In name, Huppert's character refers us to Magdalena Montezuma, one of Schroeter's longest friends and collaborators, just as the hymn not only literally refers us to the biblical Maria, but, for any viewer familiar with Schroeter's films, it surely also summons an evocation of Maria Callas. Later, this constellation is made even more forcefully, for in a scene in a café in Sintra, Huppert's voice (it is unclear whether she is 'Maria' or 'Magdalena' at this point) literally conjoins with that of Callas singing "Ah! Vieni al tiempo" (Ah! How time

passes) from Vincenzo Bellini's *Il puritani*. One of many references to time in the film, these scenes figuratively and literally crystallize Schroeter's 'holy trinity' of women (Callas, Montezuma and Huppert) into constellation in a single "allegorical image", brought together across time and across the abyss of death through music and voice.

But still, 'meaning' can never be 'fixed' by these references. They are never merely 'symbolic,' for in allegory the metaphorical process must be approximate to allow for ever-more meanings to rise up and to circulate. These images continually resonate and synthesize with other images in the film, as well as through Schroeter's entire oeuvre. The embodiment of these characters by Isabelle Huppert tends also to refer them to Schroeter's other films in which Huppert appears: *Malina* and *Poussières d'amour*. In *Deux*, 'Magdalena' and 'Maria' at various times appear to be afflicted by a similar crisis of the gestural sphere as that which affects Huppert's character in *Malina*, moving in the same disjointed manner, and in *Deux*, as in *Poussières d'amour*, we are once again treated to Huppert's enthusiastic but ultimately 'faulty' operatic voice.²⁵ But further, Huppert's performance also refers to a point beyond herself and evokes another of Schroeter's prominent female protagonists: Carla Aulaulu. Scenes of Huppert (as 'Maria') performing cabaret in a small bar, singing "Les Goëlands" by Lucien Boyer, recall similar scenes in *Eika Katappa* and *Der Bomberpilot*. Furthermore, at the very end of *Deux*, memories of Aulaulu in *Eika Katappa* are even more strongly evoked, bringing us back to the slippage between human and doll mentioned earlier. In that film Aulaulu appears as a wind-up doll, evoking Jacques Offenbach's automaton 'Olympia' from his opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*. At the end of *Deux* 'Magdalena', who has been murdered by her sister 'Maria', is 'resurrected' as a kind of puppet, taken to her final resting place in a beachside grave by a series of sticks manipulated by a living Buddha, a sailor and what appear to be several stagehands or perhaps even Ninjas. Further significance of this reference to Offenbach's 'Olympia' may be located in the triplication of Huppert (simultaneously herself, 'Maria' and 'Magdalena') that seems to mirror the fact that the three female roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann* ('Olympia' the automaton or doll, 'Antonia' the opera singer and 'Guilietta' the courtesan) are sometimes performed by the same soprano. While Callas is not known for singing any of these roles, except one performance of the *Barcarolle* "Belle nuit, o nuit d'amour" very early in her career,²⁶ this constellation of female stereotypes: doll, singer, prostitute may be found throughout Schroeter's films and therefore resonates very strongly here. But further, these associations finally bring us almost full circle (before taking off in yet another direction in true allegorical fashion), for 'Magdalena's' burial scene return us to the last image I mentioned before breaking off my description of the opening sequence: the face of Huppert that is revealed by the gesture of a hand brushing sand. Although I believe that this face is *literally* encased in glass, like the central protagonist in Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932), whose virtual double emerges from his body in the central dream sequence to witness his own burial from inside a coffin.²⁷ At the same time, however, it is *virtually* a mirror-image as we are by this stage led to assume that the hand is Huppert's, virtually looking her own 'death's head' in the face. This image is highly evocative of baroque allegory in which, according to Benjamin,



Malina 1990. Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin – Deutsche Kinemathek © Werner Schroeter

the observer is confronted with the *facies hippocratica* of history as a petrified, primordial landscape. Everything about history that, from the very beginning, has been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful, is expressed in a face – or rather in a death's head.²⁸

The death's head, which recurs in many different forms in *Deux* (as throughout Schroeter's oeuvre) similarly expresses everything that is 'untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful' about the fate of all of the film's characters.

This process of allegorical interpretation could go on and on, potentially leading us associatively through virtually every image (and piece of music) in Schroeter's cinematic oeuvre. What is important is that the slippage or displacement of meaning not become fixed in a single, final idea, but should be 'doubled' or multiplied like the film (*Deux*) itself, with each new association containing the potential to be displaced into an endless series of associations.

Like Schroeter, the self-proclaimed allegorist and exiled Chilean film-maker Raul Ruiz believes that the cinema is a "major allegorical system".²⁹ He has spoken of allegory as just such a process of displaced meaning, which recalling Benjamin also involves a kind of 'touching'. Ruiz states:

You make an allegory and this allegory touches an element of real life and makes this element become an allegory of something else, of some distant object, and when this object is touched it becomes another allegory and so on.³⁰

Apart from engaging in this process of semantic slippage, the fragment, for Benjamin has another purpose in the overall construction of allegorical works. Describing the allegorical dramas, or *Traverspiel* of the seventeenth century Benjamin writes: "it is common practice in the literature of the baroque to pile up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal, and, in the unremitting expectation of a miracle, to take the repetition of stereotypes for a process of intensification."³¹

Particularly on a first viewing of *Deux*, the seemingly disconnected images described above do not appear to be announcing a story as such. There is no way of knowing for sure how they connect, or if, indeed, they are supposed to. They are not grounded in a particular context that might give them meaning. What these images do, however, is to announce a series of enigmas that circulate through and may or may not be explained during the course of the film. At this stage, they are a series of fragments that don't appear to be leading anywhere. Indeed, one could say that this is also Schroeter's 'common practice', for he frequently opens his films in this way, with an array of seemingly unconnected images that generate a series of enigmas for the viewer. The 'miracle' or revelation of concrete meaning that one might expect to emerge from them, however, will invariably remain deferred. Those familiar with Schroeter's oeuvre will know instinctively that such images will indeed enter into a process of repetition, reappearing time and again throughout the film in different constellations. Sometimes the reappearance of such images renders them legible but, at other times, they become all the more enigmatic. Such images, however, do indeed enter into such a process of intensification described by Benjamin, because they are very much immanent images, torn from any strict linear or temporal context, but nevertheless containing all possibilities of past, present and future (of the film, of the characters, of Schroeter's cinematic practice as a whole) within them. This is true also of Schroeter's decidedly more 'narrative' films such as *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* and *Regno di Napoli*, for rather than proceeding in a strictly linear fashion, they too proceed episodically according to the logic of the fragment and contain a series of immanent images, containing within them virtually all past, present and future possibilities waiting to be actualized. Such images point to 'future' moments in respect to film-time, yet as will often be discovered, they are already images of the past, 'remembered' images but without a locatable 'present' from which such memories might be launched.

In many ways, therefore, Schroeter's allegorical practice also recalls the concepts of 'involuntary memory' and 'non-sensuous correspondences' that make their way into Benjamin's work via Proust, Baudelaire and his discussions of the 'mimetic faculty'.³² In fact, Benjamin ascribes the same destructive allegorical intention that he discovered in baroque allegory to the work of Baudelaire, who for him is the quintessential allegorist of modern life. Benjamin writes: "Tearing things out of the context of their usual interrelations...is a procedure very characteristic of Baudelaire.

It is related to the destruction of the organic interrelations in the allegorical intention."³³

This destruction of organic interrelations is closely aligned with Benjamin's particular conception of mimesis, which does not hinge merely upon the processes of copying or imitation. The mimetic faculty, which manifests itself most readily in children's play is not, writes Benjamin, "limited to what one person can imitate in another. The child plays at being not only a shopkeeper or a teacher but also a windmill and a train."³⁴ For Benjamin, in the adult world, the mimetic faculty seems to have been severely diminished by modern life's seduction to routine. This capacity lives on in the daily play of children. This is important to keep in mind for a theorization of allegorical cinema, since, with the standardization and conventionalization of film narrative, our capacity to 'play' with the fragments of our cultural world and to make connections between disparate things becomes severely limited. The fragmentary elements of allegorical cinema call upon us to seek out non-sensuous rather than 'logical', or what Deleuze would call, borrowing from the science of neuro-physiology, "sensory-motor" connections. This, I believe, is what Schroeter meant when he said of culture "these are the materials I play with."³⁵

This evocation of the child is echoed in the writings of yet another important allegorical film-maker, Schroeter's compatriot, Alexander Kluge, and it is linked to a desire to create a new kind of film, one that also implies a new kind of spectator. In fact, Kluge invokes the figure of a child as an allegory of the ideal spectator of his films. Kluge writes:

At the present time there are enough cultivated entertainment and issue-oriented films, as if cinema were a stroll on walkways in a park...One need not duplicate the cultivated. In fact children prefer the bushes: they play in the sand or in scrap heaps.³⁶

That he invokes the figure of the child in this image is important both politically and conceptually. On one level, it is the child who, for Kluge and the other 'Young' German film-makers of the 1960s, represented the hope for cinema, the antidote to the mass-produced products of 'Papa's Kino', those films that simply stuck to the well-worn garden paths. On a conceptual level, it is the child who is least 'cultivated', least affected by the teachings of 'cultured' society. The child is the one who is open to new experiences, who has not yet learnt to raise her or his defences against the shocks that modern life deals us. It is the child who is able to raise a "storm of phantasy",³⁷ who sees the allegorical potential of things to become, just as Benjamin had thought, something other. Children, in this sense, are the ones who pick over the discarded remnants of society. Children are the ones who play in the sand, the material result of the (allegorical) effects of time and weather upon what was once solid stone, and children are today's allegorists, the ones who are able to pick up a discarded thing – the unwanted junk of society, the refuse of mass production (the modern form of the ruin in a 'disposable' society) – a bottle top or a paper bag, for instance, and imagine in each scrap an entire universe to be explored. This childlike

capacity, according to Kluge, is what one must bring to the film-making process, from the point of view of the film-maker and the spectator alike. As we shall see shortly, it is also a child who figures prominently in the shift in the logic of film images from movement-images to time-images in the period following the Second World War and who also becomes emblematic of a new kind of allegorical cinema that could be said to have also emerged around this time.

The Allegorical Turn

Since its invention in 1895, film could be said to have always carried with it the potential to be allegorical. Indeed, Tom Gunning has demonstrated that the films of Fritz Lang may be read as ‘allegories of vision and modernity’, and notes that even before Lang, the silent film was fertile ground for the emergence of allegory in cinema.³⁸ In his essay “The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant Garde”, Gunning argued that certain features of early or ‘primitive’ cinema were literally pushed “underground” with the development and standardization of filmic narrative structures around 1906 and 1907. Furthermore, those elements that were pushed underground, emerged much later in avant-garde film practices.³⁹ As Miriam Hansen has pointed out, Gunning argues that the cinema of attractions persisted in “underground” cinema practices as a way of conceptualizing an “alternative vision of cinema” which includes “a range of film/spectator relations that differ from the alienated and alienating organization of classical Hollywood cinema.”⁴⁰ While allegorical films are neither necessarily avant-garde nor “underground”, there are certain tendencies in the allegorical mode, which could be said to have descended from early cinema. Not only do they frequently privilege the tableau, they also tend to resist linear narrative and to construct a variety of film/spectator relations that differ considerably from those presented by most mainstream narrative films by involving the viewer very deeply in the process of producing meaning. This is due to the fact that allegory, whether literary, pictorial or cinematic, usually contains at least two levels of meaning: a literal or obvious meaning and a figurative or allegorical level that suggests a range of possible interpretations or “alternative visions”. This is how allegory may, in the most basic definition of its process, achieve the task of saying one thing, while pointing to an alternative or radically different idea. In the cinema, these multiple layers of meaning require the spectator to engage in a process of interpretation that is not usually required of them by classical Hollywood cinema.

It is true that the classical period saw the emergence of a number of allegorical films, particularly those based on existing allegorical works (like *Moby Dick*, John Huston, 1956, for instance), or those that elicited allegorical readings – films like *High Noon* (Fred Zinneman, 1952), *On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954) or *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956) – appearing at a time when Hollywood cinema was undergoing a crisis and allegorizing the fears and threats presented by the Cold War and the HUAC hearings. These tend, however, to be simply allegorical *stories* with fairly limited symbolic resonance and do not depart significantly from the classical narrative mode. They are ultimately geared toward the presentation of a single, final idea. Meaning tends to be closed off rather than opened up by the film. Their

construction is still organic or sensory-motor and, unlike more recent examples of allegorical cinema, they tend not to reveal the mechanisms by which their allegorical levels are constructed due to the necessity of rendering cinematic techniques such as editing invisible. In such films, therefore, the full allegorical potential of the cinema is rarely exploited. In order to locate the emergence of more truly allegorical cinema, we need to look beyond Hollywood and similarly codified narrative forms.

I believe that the true allegorical potential of the cinema was not technically and aesthetically explored until the rise of certain new film movements in Europe in the post-Second World War period, reaching its height in a number of very specific contexts. I would like to suggest that a veritable 'turn' to allegorical cinema was made possible by a much larger shift in the realm of cinematic images that came about through what Deleuze described as the loosening of the cinema's sensory-motor schema.

In fact, a number of writers have located such a turn to allegorical cinema in the European cinemas of the post-World War II period. Angus Fletcher, for example, in the conclusion of his comprehensive study of allegorical literature wrote: "Consider the films: there has been no lack of allegory in recent cinema."⁴¹ Without saying exactly how such recent cinema might be allegorical, the film-makers to which he refers include Vittorio De Sica, Ingmar Bergman, Federico Fellini, Luis Buñuel, Michelangelo Antonioni and Alain Resnais among others, all of whom Gilles Deleuze identified in his *Cinema* books as playing a part in the emergence of the time-image. They could also be said to incorporate an allegorical intention into cinematic expression itself by altering and resisting many of the classical devices of narrative, characterization and storytelling that had been the mainstay of cinema since the development of longer narrative forms from around 1906 and 1907 onwards.

Allegorical cinema of the late twentieth century must be associated with this shift, with a kind of cinema that challenges and disrupts the codes and conventions of mainstream continuity cinema. In fact, long before Deleuze was to write his volumes on cinema, Theodore Adorno hinted at the possibility of a film that could be liberated from the codified constraints of the "culture industry". He called this the "liberated film".⁴² Significantly, Adorno locates the birth of such a film in the burgeoning Young German Cinema of the early 1960s. He writes: "In this comparatively awkward and unprofessional cinema, uncertain of its effects, is inscribed the hope that the so-called mass media might eventually become something qualitatively different."⁴³ He continues, "works which have not completely mastered their technique, conveying as a result something uncontrolled and accidental, have a liberating quality."⁴⁴ Furthermore, Adorno believed that the fragmenting possibilities offered by montage was one of the keys toward achieving a more worthwhile cinematic experience.⁴⁵ As we will see in the following chapters, Schroeter's films often seem uncontrolled and accidental and it is this quality that contributes to their allegorical potential. In addition, he uses a form of allegorical montage that works either literally with editing to insert spatial and temporal gaps between shots and scenes, as well as employing a form of conceptual montage through which he inserts similar gaps between

character and actor, giving them not only a kind of childlike helplessness, but a self-consciously constructed quality most suitable to allegory. Like the twin Huppert characters in *Deux*, Schroeter's actors never fully inhabit or become their characters, but tend to hover in a perpetual state of becoming where they represent themselves as much as they represent their characters. Huppert, for example, always coexists alongside 'Maria' and 'Magdalena' who also coexist with all other possible Marias and Magdalenas, who in turn merge and disperse at various junctures. As we shall see with Deleuze's conception of the "crystal-image", we no longer have the ability to decide between the virtual and the actual, actor and character, nor does this distinction really matter any more.

While Kluge and Adorno both called for a new approach to cinema that was childlike and 'uncontrolled,' in his books on cinema, French philosopher Gilles Deleuze has evoked a similar image of a child who for him becomes emblematic of a conceptual shift in the logic of cinematographic images in the period following the Second World War. This child marks the shift from the cinema of the movement-image to one of the time-image. In the opening chapter of *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze writes:

The role of the child in neo-realism has been pointed out, notably in De Sica (and later in France with Truffaut); this is because in the adult world, the child is affected by a certain motor helplessness, but one which makes him all the more capable of seeing and hearing.⁴⁶

Cinema, particularly in Europe, thus becomes a cinema of the "seer", rather than of the "agent". This is particularly important for developing a conception of allegorical cinema. Just as for the cinema of the time-image, more generally, characters in allegorical cinema do not function as agents of narrative progression, but rather serve as 'witnesses' to events. They are frequently afflicted by melancholy, which renders them incapable of acting, but all the more capable of adopting an "allegorical way of seeing".

According to Deleuze, around the end of the Second World War, a new kind of image comes to dominate the cinema. This new kind of image is brought about by the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema, which had characterized the cinema of the movement-image. The child is but one of the many figures, incapable of acting and interacting in situations in which they find themselves, emblematic of a shift that occurs on a much broader cinematic level: namely, within the kinds of concepts that the cinema gives rise to. The cinema repeats a revolution that, according to Deleuze, took place in philosophy over the period of several centuries: "The subordination of time to movement was reversed, time ceases to be the measurement of normal movement, it increasingly appears for itself and creates paradoxical movements."⁴⁷ In the cinema, writes Deleuze: "The movement-image of the so-called classical cinema gave way, in the post-war period, to a direct time-image."⁴⁸

The cinema of the inter-war period was built upon the coherence and integration of the sensory-motor schema. This refers to the way that in the body messages travel from

the sense organs to the brain via the synaptic fluid that generally facilitates the direct transfer of information to the brain and back to the relevant part of the body resulting in the stimulation of motor-responses, which produces movement. Movement, which is the dominant characteristic of this cinema, is brought about through three types of linkage: between situation and action, action and reaction, and excitation and response. These three types of linkages, or motor-responses, correspond to the three major components of the movement-image: the perception-image, the action-image and the affection-image. All involve an activity of stimulation-response whose task is not only to initiate movement, but to prolong it as well: to give it direction and momentum. It is a cinema of behaviour, where characters act and react 'appropriately' to certain situations and 'emote' in response to given stimuli. The conventions of what, in other film-theoretical discourses, is called classical continuity editing contribute to this state of the cinematographic image.⁴⁹ In the movement-image, time is always subordinated to movement: time is produced only through movement.

According to Deleuze, "in Europe, the post-war period has greatly increased the situations which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces which we no longer know how to describe."⁵⁰ In such situations, the sensory-motor schema of the movement-image begins to break down, allowing for time to be presented directly. As Deleuze writes: "And thanks to this loosening of the sensory-motor linkage, it is time, 'a little time in the pure state,' which rises up to the surface of the screen."⁵¹ Eventually the sensory-motor link is not simply loosened, but severed entirely, giving rise to what Deleuze calls "pure optical and sound situations," through which a direct image of time, or 'time-image' may emerge.

Schroeter's films frequently produce these "pure optical and sound situations", highly affective images: lips, eyes, bodies, hands, gestures, shots of sky, windows, waves, flowers, lights, colours, and sounds: usually familiar pieces of opera and popular music. All are freed from any obvious narrative purpose, instead existing in and for themselves. Rather than moving a story along, they tend to move the spectator and gently hold them in a state of "haptic fascination". Eventually, as I shall discuss shortly, this enables highly unique and complexly temporal images to crystallize in Schroeter's films.

I will proceed shortly to discuss some of the characteristics of the very specific kind of allegorical time-image produced by Schroeter's films, but first I should like to look at the historical conditions that contributed to this crisis of the sensory-motor schema, the emergence of the new image, and what Deleuze refers to in general as "modern cinema". Such an examination of those conditions might help to explain why so many examples of allegorical cinema have been produced in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Although Deleuze locates the emergence of the new cinema in general around the end of World War II, towards the end of *Cinema 1* he attempts to be a little more specific. He writes: "it is first of all in Italy that the great crisis of the action-image took place. The timing is something like: around 1948, Italy; about 1958 France; about 1968, Germany."⁵² Deleuze himself asks the question: "Why Italy first, before

France and Germany?"⁵³ As for the belated appearance of the new cinema in France, Deleuze attributes this to the part France played in the Allied victory over Germany: to France's "historical and political ambition to belong fully to the circle of victors." Deleuze continues:

These conditions were not favourable to a renewal of the cinematographic image, which found itself kept within the framework of a traditional action-image, at the service of a properly French 'dream'. The result of this was that the cinema in France was only able to break with this tradition rather belatedly and by a reflexive or intellectual detour which was that of the New Wave.⁵⁴

In contrast, the relatively early appearance of the new image in Italy owed much to the fact, according to Deleuze, that the Italian film industry "had escaped fascism relatively successfully."⁵⁵ Responding immediately to the post-war situation, Italian neo-realism literally pictures the kinds of destroyed and disused landscapes created by the war: spaces "deserted but inhabited, disused warehouses, wastegrounds, cities in the course of demolition or reconstruction."⁵⁶ Neo-realism brought into being a new race of characters: seers rather than agents. Furthermore, according to Deleuze, in neo-realism, we can see the new image in the process of being born, for it is here that the five characteristics of the new image are forged: *"the dispersive situation, the deliberately weak links, the voyage form, the consciousness of clichés, the condemnation of the plot."*⁵⁷

Deleuze, however, largely avoids pinpointing the reasons for the even more belated emergence of the new image in Germany.⁵⁸ So, I should like to ask not "why Italy first," but rather, why does the new image seem to appear so late in Germany?

While the infrastructure of the Italian film industry remained largely untouched and untainted by fascism, in Germany the situation was entirely reversed. A void was created in the film industry, not only by the mass exodus of film professionals unwilling to conform to the politics of the Nazi regime, but by the fact that during the war the entire German film industry became an important tool in the Third Reich's great propaganda machine. As Anton Kaes has written: "No other film industry in the world has ever been so subservient to government propaganda."⁵⁹ After 1945, the Allied forces kept strict controls on the German film industry, divided, as was the country into four occupational zones. In the western zones, occupied by America, Britain and France, film was considered, according to Kaes, "above all as a form of commercial entertainment."⁶⁰ The conditions were created for Hollywood films to successfully dominate the market and, in doing so, to promote the ideals of the American dream. Even after Germany attained political autonomy, according to Timothy Corrigan, "the government would encourage only the most politically innocuous and cheaply made films, thus creating a 'Bavarian cottage industry' that could never compete with lavish American cinema."⁶¹ German defeat furthermore, meant the virtual annihilation of national identity. In an interview, Wim Wenders has spoken of the ensuing void: "the need to forget 20 years created a hole, and people tried to cover this...by assimilating American culture."⁶²

In Germany, as in Italy, the end of the war brought about situations which no one quite new how to respond to. However, unlike in Italy, in Germany film-makers were either unwilling or unable to confront the recent past in the same way. Kaes writes:

The trauma of defeat and the resulting 'political quarantine' under which the occupation powers placed the Germans in 1945 inhibited an open political analysis of the conditions, mechanisms, and consequences of National Socialism.⁶³

The "denazification" of Germany ensured also that a whole period of German history could not be brought into the open and discussed. Kaes continues with a pertinent metaphor: "As the debris was cleared away, the visible signs of the past were removed as well. Soon grass grew over the ruins and people began to build the foundations of new houses in bomb craters."⁶⁴ And soon in the cinema, too, the ruins were hidden under the dreamworld of the grassy hills and imaginary bucolic landscapes of the kitsch and clichéd *Heimatfilme* (homeland films) of the 1950s. It is toward these films, among other genres such as war films, comedies, adventures, and musicals,⁶⁵ that the Oberhausener's attack against Papas Kino is addressed.

By simply clearing away or building over the ruins in the German landscape, the conditions that might have brought about the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema of the cinema sooner were masked. Just as the German population wished to 'move on' from the past, the cinema too lapsed into a series of habitual motor responses, giving the illusion of moving forward, but effectively replaying the same story over and over again.⁶⁶ Clichés enter into an interminable circuit without ever managing to reach a state of reflexive consciousness that might serve to unmask the processes that produce them. Such an unbroken circuit prevents an 'image' from being extracted from the cliché, and so prevents a new cinema from coming into being.⁶⁷ But perhaps even more importantly, time is excluded from the image, which hovers in what Kaes called the "Arcadia of trivial myth" that presents an "illusory image of German reality and history that indirectly points up the repressions, self-deceptions, and collective wishes that were at work."⁶⁸

It is, therefore, not until a younger generation of German film-makers in the 1960s made a conscious attempt to dig up the rubble of the past that this illusory movement-image may be stopped in its tracks, and a direct image of time could be released from amidst the ruins. It is for this reason, I would suggest, that the time-image does not emerge in Germany until much later than in either Italy or France, although it is arguable that this might have occurred a little earlier than Deleuze's suggested date of 1968.⁶⁹

The Young German Filmmakers, who had been born around the end of the war and came of age during the mid 1960s, found themselves, like the neo-realist child, "affected by a certain motor helplessness" in the face of a desolate cinematic landscape presided over by 'Papas Kino'. They were forced even more than their counterparts in France or Italy, consciously and politically, to invent new ways of conceiving and making films. The motor incapacity of this new film, which was to

become the New German Cinema, can be witnessed in those characteristics most admired by Adorno. In the “awkward and unprofessional” quality of “works which have not completely mastered their technique, conveying as a result something uncontrolled and accidental,”⁷⁰ can also be located the shift of German cinema into the regime of the time-image. This combination of historical, political and aesthetic factors could also go some way to explaining the emergence of the many instances of allegory that may be found in the works of the New German Cinema.

Schroeter along with Ulrike Ottinger⁷¹ and Alexander Kluge are perhaps only the most extreme of Germany’s allegorical practitioners. Allegorical features may also be identified in the films of Herbert Achternbusch, Werner Herzog, Rosa von Praunheim, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Margarethe von Trotta and her husband Volker Schlöndorff as well as Wim Wenders whose *Der Stand der Dinge* (*The State of Things*, 1982), for example, serves as a thought-provoking meta-filmic allegory about the state of the German film industry and its relationship with Hollywood at the time. The film suspends its protagonists in a state of inaction, effectively demonstrating not only how Hollywood production methods and economic necessities tend to stifle alternate forms of cinematic expression, but also mounts a languorous protest against the kind of narrative or action-time favoured by Hollywood cinema.

Along with those film-makers named by Angus Fletcher, whose films he considered to display allegorical elements, the second half of the twentieth century has witnessed a rise in instances of allegorical cinema emerging from diverse contexts around the world. Just as in Germany, this, I believe, is largely a result of historical and socio-political forces, but may also be attributed to the freeing of film from the necessity and desire to merely imitate Hollywood production methods and codes.

Allegory tends to emerge in times of social and political upheaval, favoured for its ability to convey hidden, often subversive messages. Allegory is favoured for its simultaneous ability to conceal and reveal. This is no less the case with film as it has been for literature and theatre for centuries. Chilean-born exile Raul Ruiz, for example, attributes his allegorical ‘affliction’ to his Chilean heritage. When asked about his fascination with allegory in a public forum held in Sydney in 1993, Ruiz explained that as a schoolboy in Chile he was forced to learn “horrible allegoric works”, beginning with the national anthem. However, his interest in allegory was brought about only later, after reading Arthur Schopenhauer’s furious criticism of allegory, which sparked in him a kind of “nationalistic reaction against Schopenhauer”. Ruiz remarks: “I feel as if he were offending myself or my family or my country.”⁷² Even though his tendency toward allegory may be attributed to a kind of belated nationalistic fervour, Ruiz’s films tend to be allegorical on a number of different levels, but most of all for the way in which they continually displace meaning and scatter stories across a range of complex temporal strata, all the time refusing the viewer access to any single, concrete or final meaning. Characters frequently take on multiple functions and are immersed in a world of magical intensity where almost anything is possible and the irrational is favoured over the rational. Although

highly idiosyncratic and certainly unique in his allegorical methods, Ruiz is perhaps the film-maker who comes closest to Schroeter.

Although much more difficult to locate in a specific context of oppression and upheaval, the British film-maker Peter Greenaway may be considered to be a particularly allegorical film-maker. Drawing also on Benjamin's theory of baroque allegory in their book *Peter Greenaway: Architecture and Allegory*, authors Bridget Elliot and Anthony Purdy focus on the decidedly baroque elements of Greenaway's work.⁷³ Situating his love of grids, lists, collections, absurdist games, taxonomies, corpses and architectural structures at the heart of his aesthetically Baroque allegorical practice. Using allegory as a structuring device, the authors argue that in Greenaway's work the "plots of history, art history and sexual politics are mapped onto one another to reveal an obscure allegory of transmission."⁷⁴ As we shall see with Schroeter, Greenaway, too, protests with his eccentric and often controversial films against the grand narratives of history and socially defined gender roles. Greenaway's return to the baroque, particularly in films like *The Draftsman's Contract* (1982) and *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989), provides an aesthetic platform from which to critique traces of Victorian morality left over in twentieth-century British society as well as the more pressing weight of conservative Thatcherite politics.

There has also been no shortage of allegory in queer cinema, which has continued to develop as a particularly fertile mode of expression since the films of the New York Underground of the 1960s. Schroeter's work may indeed be situated in regard to queer cinema of this type, and he does, as Alice Kuzniar has pointed out, frequently encode passion, desire and the spectator as queer through his seductive homoerotic images and same-sex encounters.⁷⁵ At the same time, however, he does tend to avoid essentializing homosexual experience, giving his heterosexual characters just as much access to his privileged affects of passion, desire and melancholy. I would argue, therefore, that the allegorical nature of his films extends far beyond their articulations of queerness. In fact, unlike colleagues like Rosa von Praunheim who in such films as *Not the Homosexual is Perverse but the Situation in which He Finds Himself* (1970) allegorically cloaked a critique of homophobia behind a mask of exaggerated homophobia, the homosexual aspects of Schroeter's films are in fact the most literal and least allegorical aspects of his films.

Further important examples of this turn to allegory include the work of many post-colonial film-makers, as well as film-makers working under repressive dictatorships or heavily censored conditions.⁷⁶ Spanish cinema under Franco's dictatorship was a time of rich allegorical invention. In the last few decades a large number of allegorical films have appeared in contexts as diverse as Latin America, India, Eastern Europe and Africa,⁷⁷ as well as the films of Fifth Generation Chinese directors through which we see numerous allegories of the nation under communism.⁷⁸ In addition, recent post-revolutionary Iranian cinema has become rich in allegorical signification. Due to strict Islamic censorship regulations, film-makers adopt a form of veiled discourse to express themes and ideas that may not be literally shown.⁷⁹

Many of these allegorical films perform a very complex structural layering of different temporal periods, often using historical or mythical stories to comment on contemporary events, and many use specifically cinematic strategies such as flashbacks, image rhymes, allegorical characters, music and emblematic motifs in order to do so.

One beautiful and important example of allegorical cinema made under repressive conditions is Carlos Saura's *Cria Cuervos* (1974). The film, set in the summer of 1973 during the period of so-called 'soft dictatorship' in Spain when Franco was gravely ill, revolves around nine-year-old Ana, one of three children in a Madrid family. The film opens with the death of the girls' militaristic father, who Ana believes she has killed. Their mother had died a few years earlier, so their rather cold, strict aunt comes to look after them. Even though the narrative rarely leaves the confines of the domestic compound, it gradually becomes clear that Ana is being presented as a cipher for the nation. In this respect, the film exhibits a common allegorical trait of using the particular to refer to a much wider social or political situation. *Cria Cuervos* is an important example of allegorical cinema for a number of reasons. Firstly, although the film tends to follow a chronological pattern, it is structured in such a way that suggests the coexistence of at least two layers or levels. The film's action takes place almost entirely within the domestic space of the family home, yet this is impinged upon at times by emblematic representations (of militarism, the civil war, old photographs, music, the status of women) deriving from the larger social space outside the home. This constructs the domestic sphere as a parallel to the wider public sphere of Franco's Spain. The film is interrupted at various moments, often evoked by music, by a series of 'flashbacks' and 'flash forwards' into which the young wide-eyed central protagonist Ana (played by child actor Ana Torrent) inserts herself. Ana serves as what Marvin D'Lugo has called a "spectator-in-the-text"⁸⁰ who inserts herself into her own 'flashbacks' and 'flash forwards,' projecting herself twenty years into the future in the image of her deceased mother (both parts being played by Geraldine Chaplin). It is through such moments, which work as interludes separated from the narrative proper, that the viewer becomes aware of the allegorical levels at work in the film, for not only do they tend to explain why Ana is so melancholy, but they enable her to function emblematically, as a cipher for the past and future of the nation which she is about, figuratively speaking, to inherit. It is through such a cinematic strategy that we may trace the roots of such allegorical cinema to the allegorical works of seventeenth-century Germany and Spain. In the baroque *Traverspiel* Benjamin writes:

allegory is not associated with the climax of the dramatic action, but in the extended explanatory interlude...The structure of the drama is such that there are several broad layers whose chronological perspective is identical, and the level represented by the interlude became the site for a display of expressive statuary.⁸¹

In effect, Ana's flashbacks and flash forwards serve the purpose of the "explanatory interlude," pointing to the allegorical meanings imbedded in the other layers. Anna undoubtedly serves as the film's "expressive statuary", or Deleuze's "seer", who in

fact brings the various temporal layers of the film: past, present, future into direct dialectical contact.

The fact that the 'flashbacks' and 'flash forwards' in *Cria Cuervos* are rendered seamlessly, apparently without editing, and in defiance of conventions of narrative, spatial and temporal logic, effectively generates a 'dialectical image' in the true Benjaminian sense of the term, where the past and the present (as well as the future in this case) flash up to confront each other directly. For Benjamin, the past is never simply past, but is made palpable in the present by fleeting constellations of past and present. Benjamin's notion of the dialectical image and what he elsewhere called the "dialectic at a standstill" describes the moment of virtual stasis when, like "lightning", an image of the past "flashes up in the now of its recognisability", before "in the next moment [it] is already irretrievably lost."⁸² Allegorical texts and films frequently produce these moments of dynamic contact between disparate things and times. In the *Traverspiel* book, Benjamin described the temporality of allegory with the evocative dialectical image of "petrified unrest".⁸³ Benjamin writes: "Allegory establishes itself most permanently where transitoriness and eternity confronted each other most closely."⁸⁴

It is, thus, the capacity for allegory to sustain seemingly incommensurable temporalities in a single image or figure that truly recommends it to the cinema, for the cinema has an inherent ability to manipulate time and space in complex, non-linear ways. Furthermore, it is this temporal aspect of allegory as well as its tendency toward fragmentation that also makes it more suited to time-image rather than movement-image cinema. Schroeter's films, therefore, should be seen in the context of a worldwide resurgence of allegory in the face of shifting political, religious, social and cultural events, relationships, allegiances and counter-allegiances, and with the disruption and disunity caused by decolonisation. If all allegory contains within it an element of protest, a challenge to the status quo, then Schroeter's films make a sumptuous protest against almost all aspects of the cultural world. He makes it his task to resist narrative, to collapse all distinctions between opposites, to unleash the cinema from the strictures of chronology, and in the process to suspend his spectators in a world of multiplied bodies, multiplied desires and multiple times, unleashed from the dictates of the rational, sensory-motor world.

From Time-Image to Allegorical Images

Allegorical cinema is undoubtedly a kind of time-image cinema, but, as Jodi Brooks reminds us, "we must be more specific." We must ascertain the "particular form and experience of time" that is developed by particular time-images.⁸⁵ The time-image can take many forms, it can manifest itself in any number of different ways, but above all it involves a multitude of temporalities. Laleen Jayamanne has suggested that although Deleuze "does not theorise allegorical or baroque temporality in his books on the cinema one could use his ideas about the time image and combine it with what Ruiz says about allegory to come up with a particular time image deriving from allegorical forms (which are temporal constructs)."⁸⁶ This, I believe, may be achieved by attuning ourselves to some of the

resonances that take place when Deleuze's notion of the time-image is brought into contact with Benjamin's theory of allegory.

It is already possible to identify in Benjamin's theory of allegory three of the five basic characteristics of Deleuze's time-image: "*the dispersive situation*", "*the deliberately weak links*" and "*the condemnation of the plot*".⁸⁷ The allegorical mode of expression, like the time-image, privileges the fragment and is highly dispersive. Allegory, like the time-image, also tends to emerge at times of social and political upheaval. Furthermore, allegory does not manifest itself through the plotting of dramatic action, but at those moments when action is interrupted by the "explanatory interlude".

The cinema of the time-image is also, as I have mentioned, "a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent."⁸⁸ Characters seem to float through situations, rather than acting in and enacting them. The slackening of the sensory-motor linkages give rise to what Deleuze calls "pure optical and sound situations." Such a situation does not extend into action, but is rather, "invested by the senses, before action takes shape in it, and uses or confronts its elements."⁸⁹ The senses are "emancipated", and brought "into direct relation with time and thought."⁹⁰ Perhaps this is what Adorno meant when he wrote of the "liberated film". In fact, Adorno, pre-empting Deleuze, conceived of just such a film that is similarly non sensory-motor, but more directly "invested by the senses." He writes:

The most plausible theory of film technique, that which focuses on the movement of objects, is both provocatively denied and yet preserved, in negative form, in the static character of films like Antonioni's *La Notte*. Whatever is 'uncinematic' in this film gives it the power to express, as if with hollow eyes, the emptiness of time. Irrespective of the technological origins of the cinema, the aesthetics of film will do better to base itself on a subjective mode of experience which film resembles and which constitutes its artistic character.⁹¹

This slackening or interruption of the sensory-motor linkages may also be compared with the *deliberately weak links* between word and meaning in allegory. Of the allegory of the seventeenth century, Benjamin writes: "fragmented language has ceased merely to serve the process of communication."⁹² As we have already seen with the opening sequence of *Deux*, Schroeter's strategies of montage involve deliberately weakening the links between images, but not severing them entirely so that they may be allowed to resonate throughout the film and between films in such a way that appeals more directly to the viewers' senses. This process is often aided by music, gesture, colour and ornamental interludes with no causal connection to the film proper. This is the realm of the Deleuzian conception of pure affect, where stimulation does not give rise to an emotive response (an "affection-image"), instead, pure optical and sound situations linger lovingly on the senses without giving way to specific emotions. Benjamin has in fact referred to a similar process in baroque allegory where the dislocation of sound and meaning can go to work directly upon the senses. He continues:

the spoken word is only *afflicted* by meaning, so to speak, as if by an inescapable disease; it breaks off in the middle of the process of resounding, and the damming up of the feeling, which was ready to pour forth, provokes mourning.⁹³

For Benjamin, the allegorical way of seeing is consistently associated with melancholy, a condition or affliction he attributes to the allegorist quite broadly, but also to a number of other peculiarly modern figures who could be said to have inherited this allegorical way of seeing. These include the *flâneur*, the *Grübler* (ragpicker) and the *Nachzügler* (straggler), all of whom may function as allegorists, allegorical figures and allegorical interpreters or spectators. What characterizes all of these figures is an ability to see the world differently and to pass through life at a different pace to that of the 'common man'. The attitude of mourning expressed by the "downward gaze", of the melancholic who "bores into the ground with his eyes",⁹⁴ severely interferes with one's ability to act. Throughout history, melancholy has been associated with genius, madness and prophetic visions. Furthermore, according to Ficino, melancholy "seldom imprints his mark on ordinary characters and ordinary destinies, but on men who are different from others."⁹⁵ As we shall see in chapter five, Schroeter's films are populated with a range of such melancholy figures, who provide his films with a range of different allegorical ways of seeing. Furthermore, unlike Benjamin who limits the allegorical intention to exclusively male figures, Schroeter's women are often even more profoundly afflicted with a particularly potent allegorical gaze.

It is thus that the allegorical mode is afflicted by ways of seeing that severely inhibit one's ability to act, yet place an emphasis on the act of seeing itself. In cinematic terms, such a gaze would afflict all three 'looks' that Laura Mulvey identified in the cinema: the look of the camera, the look of characters within the film and the look of the spectator.⁹⁶ In the allegorical mode, however, these 'looks' do not serve processes of suture and continuity, but serve to actively disrupt those processes, resulting not so much in identification of the spectator with characters on screen or with the camera, but provoke a great sense of loss and mourning associated more directly with the images and sounds themselves. Just as Benjamin and Ruiz have identified a tactile element in allegory, so too, at least in terms of Schroeter's cinematic allegories, the "allegorical way of seeing" may be associated with a decidedly tactile element. Just as Schroeter's films cause us to relinquish our grasp of all expectations of linear narrative and psychological character development, so too they expose us to an experience of "pure touching". This, according to Deleuze, is an important aspect of the time-image. Deleuze writes: "it is the tactile which can constitute a pure sensory image, on the condition the hand relinquishes its prehensile and motor functions to content itself with a pure touching."⁹⁷ To be a sensitive and receptive viewer of Schroeter's films one does indeed need to 'let go' and simply relinquish one's hopes, dreams, desires and expectations to his unruly but highly affective method. This is a kind of passion that exists and circulates outside of any kind of localizable subjectivity. According to Michel Foucault, Schroeter's camera enters into a highly tactile relationship with on- and off-screen bodies.

...to knead the body like a dough out of which images are born, images of pleasure, and images for pleasure. At the point of an always unforeseen encounter between the camera (and its pleasure) and the body (throbbing with its own pleasure) these images and pleasures with multiple entries are born.⁹⁸

Just as for Foucault, such touching provides multiple entry points for pleasure, for Deleuze, such touching has the ability to connect discontinuous parts of space. He takes his example from Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959):

Thus in *Pickpocket*, it is the hands of the three accomplices which connect the parts of space in the Gare de Lyon, not exactly through their seizing an object, but through brushing it, arresting it in its movement, giving it another direction, passing it on and making it circulate in this space.⁹⁹

But Deleuze not only attributes this kind of touching to the hand, but also to optical apprehension, which he describes as "grabbing", or 'haptic' (*haptique*); involving "a touching which is specific to the gaze." This is not unlike the ability of the allegorical intention, or gaze, to wrest things from their usual contexts, and is highly reminiscent of Benjamin's *Grübler* who need do nothing other than let his "gaze fall",¹⁰⁰ in order to turn the object in his hand into an allegory. Benjamin's notion of shock too, which is important to his conception of modern allegory, works directly upon the senses, when our stimulus shield fails to come to our defences. Such haptic encounters allow our capacity for involuntary recollection to be activated. Films which make use of this type of haptic gaze, arrest us in our movement (conscious thought processes) and open us up, I would suggest, to a kind of 'haptic fascination,' a kind of fascination beyond individual subjectivity, which touches us and lightly holds us, and in doing so turns us into allegorical subjects all the more capable of seeing and hearing the hidden correspondences between disparate things, and all the more capable, therefore of becoming aware of the incommensurable temporalities contained within allegorical images.¹⁰¹

The new cinema inverts the spectator's identification with the characters that occurs in the cinema of the movement-image by "including the viewer in the film", and by turning the character into a "kind of viewer", or seer.¹⁰² Not only is this a more general tendency of what Kluge described as activating the "multitude of films in the minds of the spectators",¹⁰³ but it also points to the fact that in the cinema of the time-image, "the whole image has to be 'read', no less than seen, readable as well as visible."¹⁰⁴ So, too, in allegory, the image is a rune, a hieroglyph to be deciphered. The reader/spectator must adopt an allegorical way of seeing in order to read the image, to draw the allegorical meaning to the surface of the image.

Benjamin aligned cinematic montage with the fragmenting effects of allegory, but classical editing perfected the technique of hiding the process of its own construction, and therefore denied cinema its allegorical potential. To become allegorical, film must show its own manner of construction, montage must become a visible element. In the cinema of the time-image, montage takes on a new function, placing an

emphasis on the cut itself, and therefore opening itself up to the potential of allegory. The new form of montage involves “irrational cuts”, “delinkages” and “relinkages” rather than rational connections. Deleuze writes: “the montage-cut, which will dominate modern cinema, is a purely optical passage or punctuation between images, working directly, sacrificing all synthetic effects.”¹⁰⁵ It is thus that allegorical cinema extends the ‘gap’ commonly inserted between sign and signifier into the process of montage itself, which, as we shall see in chapter four, places an emphasis on this gap.

One further aspect of Deleuze’s time-image that is crucial to a theorization of allegorical cinema in general and to Schroeter’s cinematic practice more specifically, is the notion of the “crystal-image”. In the crystal-image the differences between the real and imaginary, present and past, actual and virtual are not lost, but they become “unattributable”, they enter into a relation, or circuit of mutual exchange.¹⁰⁶ The notion of the crystal-image is not unlike Benjamin’s notion of the “dialectical image”, in which opposing ideas never finally form into a new synthetic whole, but rather continually pass back and forth between extremes, where history is not conceived as successive, but rather as the fleeting constellation of past and present. Benjamin’s dialectical image of “petrified unrest”,¹⁰⁷ which lies at the heart of his theory of allegory, could, therefore, be thought of as a kind of crystal-image.

The crystal-image, along with “crystalline description” and “falsifying narration” activate what Deleuze calls the “powers of the false”. Deleuze writes: “Truthful narration is developed organically, according to legal connections in space and chronological relations in time...Falsifying narration, by contrast, frees itself from this system; it shatters the system of judgement.”¹⁰⁸ Like allegory, its time is strictly non-chronological.

Indeed, it is a very particular conception of time expressed by the concept of the crystal-image that uncannily resembles Benjamin’s dialectical image of “petrified unrest”. Deleuze writes:

What constitutes the crystal-image is the most fundamental operation of time: since the past is constituted not after the present that it was but at the same time, time has to split itself in two at each moment as present and past, which differ from each other in nature, or, what amounts to the same thing, it has to split the present in two heterogeneous directions, one of which is launched towards the future while the other falls into the past. Time has to split at the same time as it sets itself out or unrolls itself: it splits in two dissymmetrical jets, one which makes all the presents pass on, while the other preserves all the past. Time consists of this split, and it is this, it is time, that we see in the crystal.¹⁰⁹

In many ways, allegorical temporality also concerns itself with this split, with the bifurcation of time. Like allegory, which simultaneously destroys and conserves, the crystal image is a concept that at once allows a linear, mechanical understanding of time to be maintained, yet ruptures and splits this flow, sending it simultaneously in two incommensurable directions. Like the crystal, allegory too is capable of

sustaining incommensurable temporalities that point simultaneously to the past and the future without necessarily ever being located in any specific present.

All of Schroeter's films take part in this form of temporal bifurcation where repetition and temporal discontinuity tend to dislodge narration from any kind of specifiable present even in his two most chronological films *Regno di Napoli* and *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*. However, *Deux* more than any other film, obsessively takes part in this process of temporal bifurcation, making it the most perfect example of crystalline narration in recent cinema. Indeed, the film could even be read as an allegory of the very processes by which crystal-images come into being. The allegorical mode, as I have already demonstrated, also involves the processes of duality of meaning, splitting of chronology and simultaneity, as Benjamin has written, the *Traverspiel's* "most radical procedure is to make events simultaneous."¹¹⁰ Just as allegorical paintings and etching may effect this through design and composition "a rose simultaneously half in bloom and half faded and the sun rising and setting in the same landscape." In dramatic works, the "duality of meaning and reality was reflected in the construction of the stage. The use of the drop-scene permitted the alternation between actions on the forestage and scenes which extended to the full depth of the stage."¹¹¹ In allegorical cinema, such temporal simultaneity may be achieved through a variety of cinematic techniques: editing, camera placement and movement, *mise-en-scène*, characterization, acting. In *Deux*, Schroeter achieves this through a combination of the highly disjointed unfolding of episodic narratives that take place in disparate times and locations as well as through a highly allegorical form of characterization.

By casting Isabelle Huppert as twin characters, Schroeter effectively achieves not only a literal bifurcation of her role in the film into two distinct characters, but a conceptual bifurcation as well, achieved as I have already demonstrated, by naming these characters 'Maria' and 'Magdalena,' names that not only evoke certain connotations in Christian iconography, but perform meta-filmic, extra-filmic and intertextual functions in regard to Schroeter's entire oeuvre, touching even on aspects of real life. Huppert, to whom the film is dedicated and, who, for Schroeter, is a remarkably singular actress, is nevertheless engaged in the highly allegorical process of multiplication. Writing of Gryphius' allegorical drama *Cardenio und Celinde*, Benjamin remarks that it is a great testimony to Gryphius' fanaticism that "even the absolutely singular, the individual character, is multiplied in the allegorical."¹¹² Schroeter, like Gryphius, takes part in this fanatical process of multiplication, but not merely on the level of character. I would like to suggest that the twin characters in *Deux*, while literally representing the bifurcation of the ovum that takes place in the production of identical twins, conceptually and allegorically, also represent the bifurcation of time made possible by a cinema that has severed its attachment to the sensory-motor schema. As much as the twin's separation at birth represents a spatial separation, Schroeter's refusal to provide the viewer with a linear perspective of time and our frequent inability to distinguish easily between 'Maria' and 'Magdalena', suggests to me that on a conceptual level, a temporal separation is also taking place. This is like the kind of forking time conceived by Borges in his story "The Garden of Forking

Paths".¹¹³ Deleuze writes: "it is not space but time which forks, 'web of time which approaches, forks, is cut off or unacknowledged for centuries, embracing every possibility.'" ¹¹⁴ 'Maria' and 'Magdalena' are effectively emblematic of the process involved in the emergence of the crystal-image where time takes off "in two heterogeneous directions simultaneously." But rather than shooting off in two jets, one directed into the past, one into the future, they seem to inhabit discrete crystalline circuits that revolve closely around one another and may briefly touch, but never coincide or intersect. Although there are a few moments in the film where 'Maria' and 'Magdalena' meet, these are either embedded within 'dreams' in the instances where they appear in identical baby doll dresses, or they remain separated by the composition of the image and the logistics of actually having Huppert appear together in the same scene. In several instances, the twins are divided by a door frame, which effectively enables the image to be split in two (bifurcated). While they virtually appear to occupy the same image, they are still literally separated in time and space. Editing of the image allows for them to *appear* simultaneously. In further scenes, Huppert is literally 'doubled' (yet another form of bifurcation) by a body double, who only appears from behind. This tends to render Huppert in a state of pure frontality and singularity as both her characters may not in fact face us simultaneously. One must remain the mirror or 'virtual' image of the other. Before the film's final sequence, there are two separate occasions where the twins face one another. One takes place in the foyer of an opera house, and the other in a train. In the scene in the opera house, highly reminiscent of a scene from *Der Bomberpilot* where long-lost friends Carla (Aulaulu) and Magdalena (Montezuma) meet but appear not to recognize one another, 'Maria' and 'Magdalena' appear to confront one another face-to-face, have a brief conversation, but appear not to recognize their likeness. This is like looking in the mirror but not recognizing one's own reflection. During this scene, however, a tactile exchange takes place that hints at a level of recognition, not of the other, but ultimately of the self. Referring to her blouse, 'Maria' says to 'Magdalena', "feel how soft it is." We then see a shot of a hand feeling 'Maria's' blouse. 'Magdalena' replies, "it's your arm that's soft." The implied knowledge of the softness of the arm under the blouse suggests that knowledge of the other is based entirely on the knowledge of the self. This effectively keeps the twins separated, yet acknowledges the presence of self in the other and vice versa. Although they *appear* in the same image, they still operate on very separate temporal circuits. This tends to fly in the face of the implication suggested by the previous scene in which, apparently roused by the sound of a fox, 'Magdalena' leaves a production of Giuseppe Verdi's "La forza del Destino" (The force of Destiny), which is in fact only a film recording of the opera projected onto a screen in the opera house. This chance meeting does not, however, result in 'fate' bringing them together, reuniting long lost sisters, but provides yet another opportunity for bifurcation. Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of the fox, causing them both to break off in mid sentence, 'Maria' runs off, ultimately deferring unification and 'Magdalena's' death, sending them once again in different directions. In the final sequence, such unification is finally and fatally deferred, for no sooner do the twins embrace one another, than 'Maria' inflicts the fatal knife wound that will prevent 'Magdalena's' coexistence with her in time and space. Significantly, however, at the moment of this

final blow, Huppert as 'Magdalena' faces us. It is her 'double' who inflicts the wound, effectively extinguishing herself, collapsing their distinct temporal circuits into one another. As 'Magdalena' lies dying, a beautiful golden Buddha appears and says: "To bring your sister back to life, you must accept all she offers you." 'Maria', who now faces us, proceeds to imbibe her sister's vital organs: two become one. The following scene shows 'Magdalena' revived, but now she is only a puppet, a doll, the automaton 'Olympia'. She is now literally only 'Maria's' (or perhaps Huppert's) double.

The process of cutting between disparate moments in time and space used throughout the film, causes the two women's lives to revolve around one another in virtual circuits, echoing, doubling or mirroring one another without actually coexisting.¹¹⁵ Perhaps the most central and evocative occurrence of such bifurcation takes place approximately halfway through the film effectively splitting the film in two. The sequence is set at the railway station in Arles, France. Anna, the twins' estranged mother, appears to work as the stationmaster. As a stationmaster, she literally directs trains along different tracks, she inhabits the 'crossroads' of multiple directions and choices. She could, therefore, be thought of as an allegorical figure of forking time. The sequence is introduced with a series of highly affective images very typical of Schroter's oeuvre: the blurred movement of a train rushing by, its movement reflected in a mirror that obscures part of the frame, presenting dual views; a view through a window; a clock showing 5.40, its pendulum keeping a steady rhythm; a circular fan mounted in a window spinning rapidly; shots of fluffy clouds in a blue sky. As Anna reads a passage from Stendhal's *La chartreuse de Parme*, the montage of images continues, frequently returning to the clock's pendulum, its rhythm also marking time on the soundtrack. Anna salutes a flag as a soldier approaches. A conversation ensues:

Soldier: "I'm thirsty. Would you perhaps have something to drink? It's very hot in this uniform."

Anna: "Where have you come from?"

Soldier: "Paris. I'm taking the connection to Portugal in a few minutes."

As the conversation proceeds, Anna asks the soldier if he would do her a favour and mail two postcards from Portugal when he arrives. These are the postcards that carry the text read by Anna in voice-over during the opening sequence of the film. Just as she is asking him to do this, Anna takes the pendulum in her hand and stops its movement. Anna's gesture effectively 'stops time', and in doing so she makes visible time's bifurcation, figuratively represented by the two postcards that will also be sent in two different directions, and will be caught in two different temporal circuits once they reach their destinations. The paths of Anna and the sailor will also bifurcate, for his train is about to arrive. He asks her what she will do when he leaves. Anna replies: "I will continue to read." Through this conversation we discover that Anna is in fact caught in a cycle of repetition, for not only is *La chartreuse de Parme* the only book she has ever read, she has never read the whole book, just one passage over and over. Anna effectively figures crystalline time, from which all pasts and futures

bifurcate. She is one point among an infinite number of others from which time bifurcates. By literally abandoning 'Maria' and 'Magdalena', we may figuratively see this process at work, their lives functioning as distinct temporal circuits. By pausing time, this sequence effectively functions as an "explanatory interlude" where Anna becomes a profound "emblematic statuary" of the kind of crystalline temporality most appropriate to allegorical cinema. In true allegorical fashion, however, she appears to be aware of the impossibility of literally stopping time. When the soldier laments that his train is about to take him on his way, Anna responds: "Poor soldier. It will pass...everything passes." Their fleeting encounter is about to end.

Allegory concerns itself with all that is ephemeral and fleeting, just like Anna, it witnesses the destructiveness of time in the form of the presents that pass and pasts that present themselves to the future. At the same time, however, allegory attempts to take hold of fragments of the past in order to secure them for all eternity. In the *Traverspiel* book Benjamin writes: "Allegory establishes itself most permanently where transitoriness and eternity confronted each other most closely."¹¹⁶ The cinema of Werner Schroeter introduces us to just this kind of temporality. As I shall argue in the following chapters, Schroeter creates a multitude of 'allegorical images' in his films. He does this largely through the use of tableau, montage, characterization and perhaps most importantly through gesture where time finally enters the body and works its destructive and conserving allegorical processes upon it.

Notes

1. Conversation with Schroeter, (14 April 2005).
2. In using the term allegorical cinema, I do not intend to suggest that this could be anything like a genre, for as we shall see in the present chapter, allegory is a mode of expression, it is a process and it takes on many different forms. The term should therefore never be used for the purposes of generic labelling.
3. Conchita Supervia (1895–1936) is one of several dominant female singers to be heard throughout Schroeter's films.
4. *Cinema 1*, 210. I shall discuss the characteristics of the new image shortly.
5. *OGTD*, 178.
6. *Ibid.*, 178.
7. *Ibid.*, 217.
8. "Central Park," 38.
9. The original German reads, "Das von der allegorischen Intention Betroffene wird aus den Zusammenhängen des Lebens ausgesondert."
10. "Central Park," 51.
11. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, trans., Harry Zohn (London: Fontana Press, 1992). 229.
12. Benjamin contrasts this type of experience (*Erfahrung*), with *Erlebnis*. He used *Erfahrung* to describe something we experience 'in depth' and *Erlebnis* as the kind of short-lived experience he associates with the thrills of modern life.
13. Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology,'" *New German Critique*, n. 40 (Winter, 1987), 209.
14. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 230.
15. *OGTD*, 208.
16. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 230.

17. OGTD., 207.
18. Ibid., 175.
19. This distinction between symbol and allegory is central to Benjamin's discussion of the baroque *Trauerspiel*. He attributes the denigration of the allegorical mode during the romantic period to the critical neglect of these works. See part 1 of "Allegory and Trauerspiel" in OGTD, 159-167.
20. These years are never actually given in the film. The only time in the film that an exact year is implied is when we hear a radio announcement stating that Pope John Paul II is the first non-Italian born Pope for five centuries and that the first test tube baby was born in Manchester. This gives us a date of 1978. It is almost impossible, however, for the viewer to know the years in which the events take place, except via the costumes and gestures of the characters. The year and location of each sequence is, however, evident in the film's unpublished dialogue list, kindly supplied to me by the film's editor, Juliane Lorenz.
21. This association with death is further emphasized in rather absurd fashion later in the film when, following the sound of a gunshot, outside a nightclub, a character sings "Jungle bells, jingle bells, Santa Claus is dead. Johnny took his '45 and shot him in the head!"
22. At another point in the film, these living statues, painted white, appear in a gallery space, this time facing one another, forming mirror images of one another. Magdalena approaches them and attempts to distract them by passing her hand between them, but they remain, like statues, unblinking, unmoving and apparently unaware of each other's existence.
23. The film is called *Blonde Sinner* in the English subtitles, but appears to be the 1956 film *Yield to the Night*, featuring blonde bombshell Diana Dors in the lead role.
24. I shall discuss this figure, along with a range of other allegorical figures at length in chapter 5.
25. I shall discuss the notion of 'faulty performance' as a trait of Schroeter's allegorical cinema at length in chapter 5.
26. See Michael Scott's biography *Maria Meneghini Callas* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1992). Scott lists Callas as singing this piece on 22 May 1939 at Parnasson Hall. 250.
27. Schroeter cites Dreyer as one of his major inspirations.
28. OGTD, 166.
29. Raul Ruiz, "Raul Ruiz forum, Australian Film Institute, Sydney 1993," published in *Agenda*, n. 30/31 (May, 1993), 51. This event stands out in my memory as a particularly important moment for the early conceptualization of this book. Ruiz's comments about allegory became the catalyst that sparked my own interest in allegory and coincided very closely with my introduction to the films of Werner Schroeter.
30. Raul Ruiz, "The Cinema of Raul Ruiz", interview by Adrian Martin, *Cinema Papers*, n. 91 (January, 1993), 61.
31. OGTD, 178.
32. For Benjamin's discussion of these terms in regard to Baudelaire and Proust see Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", and "The Image of Proust", *Illuminations*, trans., Harry Zohn (London: Fontana Press, 1992).
33. "Central Park", 41. (Translation modified).
34. Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty", in *Reflections*, Peter Demetz ed., (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 333.
35. Quoted in Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 48.
36. Alexander Kluge, *Die Patriotin: Texte/Bilder*, 1-6, quoted in Theodore Fiedler, "Alexander Kluge, Mediating History and Consciousness", Klaus Phillips ed., *New West German Filmmakers: From Oberhausen Through the 1970s* (Frederick Ungar, 1984), 225.
37. Alexander Kluge, "The Significance of Phantasy", *New German Critique*, n. 24/25 (fall/ winter 1981-2), 216.
38. Tom Gunning *The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity* (London: BFI, 2000).

39. Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant Garde", Thomas Elsaesser ed., *Early Cinema, Space, Frame, Narrative* (London: BFI Publishing, 1990). I will return to Gunning's argument in chapter 3.
40. Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience", 180-181.
41. Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca & New York: Cornell University Press, 1964), 365.
42. Theodore Adorno, "Transparencies on Film", *New German Critique*, n. 24/25, (fall/winter 1981-2), 203. In her introduction to this article, Miriam Hansen suggests that Adorno is resuming "his imaginary dialogue with Benjamin", 189.
43. *Ibid.*, 199.
44. *Ibid.*, 199.
45. *Ibid.*, 203.
46. *Cinema 2*, 3.
47. *Ibid.*, xi.
48. *Ibid.*, xi.
49. Deleuze discusses not only the contributing factor of montage to this image, but also of framing, camera movement, composition, lighting, space, genre and performance.
50. *Cinema 2*, preface, xi.
51. *Ibid.*, xi.
52. *Cinema 1*, 211.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*, xi.
57. *Cinema 1*, 210. I shall discuss the characteristics of the new image shortly.
58. Just as Deleuze also avoids discussion of most of the major directors of the New German Cinema such as Kluge, Fassbinder, Ottinger, Sander, Sanders-Brahms. While Syberberg, Wenders and Herzog are referred to at more length, Schlöndorff, Schroeter and Schmid raise but a brief mention.
59. Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4.
60. *Ibid.*, 10.
61. Corrigan, *New German Film*, 2.
62. Wim Wenders, quoted in Timothy Corrigan, *New German Film*, 1.
63. Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat* 12-13.
64. *Ibid.*, 13.
65. For a discussion of these films see Claudius Seidl, *Der Deutsche Film der Fünfziger Jahre*, (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1987).
66. Kaes notes that the 300 or so *Heimatfilme* made during the 1950s had "more or less uniform narrative structures and similar images." They had precedents in the mountain films of the 1930s and some were even "remakes of films from the Hitler era." *From Hitler to Heimat*, 15.
67. Deleuze defines the cliché as "a sensory-motor image of the thing." According to Deleuze, one of the requisites for the birth of the new cinematic image is for the cliché to become conscious, for its illusion to be shattered so that its mass production and proliferation in cinema advertising, magazines and television can be brought to a halt. In order to do so, a film-maker must attain a level of critical reflection. Extracting an image from a cliché allows for that image to be set up against the cliché, so that it might look itself in the face and recognize itself as cliché. See *Cinema 1*, 209-211. For Benjamin, it is precisely this kind of reflexive consciousness that allegory grants to the commodity: "Ever more callously the object world of man assumes the expression of the commodity. At the same time advertising seeks to veil the commodity character of things. In the allegorical the deceptive transfiguration of

the world of the commodity resists its distortion. The commodity attempts to look itself in the face. It celebrates its becoming human in the whore." *Central Park*, 42. I will demonstrate how Schroeter is able to extract an image from the cliché in chapter 5.

68. Kaes, 14-15.
69. Indeed, it is always impossible to locate the definitive date of such phenomena. We should bear in mind that the Oberhausen Manifesto was signed in 1962, but experiments in new kinds of cinema had been taking place in Germany for some time. Straub and Huillet make a break as early as 1962 with their short *Machorka-Muff* and, then, in 1965, with *Nicht versöhnt*. Alexander Kluge's first feature *Abschied von Gestern* (1966) is preceded several years earlier by the short *Brutalität in Stein* (1960), co-directed by Kluge and Peter Schamoni. According to Eric Rentschler, this film "represents Young German Film's earliest signs of life." The film carries with it the following declaration which echoes Benjamin's conclusion in the *Traverspiel* book: "Every edifice left to us by history emanates the spirit of its creator and its age, even when it no longer stands in the service of its original function. The forsaken edifices of the National Socialist Party, as testaments in stone, allow memories to come alive of that epoch which led to the most terrible catastrophe in German history." See Rentschler, "Remembering not to Forget: A Retrospective Reading of Kluge's *Brutality in Stone*", *New German Critique*, n. 49, (winter, 1990), 23-24. One short film, however, cannot cause such a major shift in the realm of cinematic images. Deleuze's date seems to refer more to the point at which funding structures had been set up, mainly through the establishment of the Kuratorium Junger Deutsche Film in 1965, and the subsequent entry of those films into the public sphere of West Germany. The late 1960s were, in any case, a time of perceptible change.
70. Adorno, *Transparencies in Film*, 199.
71. Extended analysis of the allegorical features of most of these director's work is rare, but a good discussion of allegory in Ottinger's may be found in Alice Kuzinar *Queer German Cinema* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford UP, 2000), chapter 5 "Allegory, Androgyny, Anamorphosis: Ulrike Ottinger's *Dorian Gray*". Kuzinar also briefly discusses the allegorical nature of Schroeter's films in chapter 4 of the same book, "The Passionate Evidence" of Werner Schroeter's *Maria Malibran* and *Der Rosenkönig*.
72. Raul Ruiz, "Raul Ruiz forum, Australian Film Institute, Sydney 1993", published in *Agenda*, n. 30/31 (May, 1993), 51. Benjamin's *Traverspiel* book is also in part an attempt to redeem allegory from the obscurity into which it fell during the romantic age and cites such figures as Schopenhauer and Goethe as responsible for its denigration and outmodedness.
73. Bridget Elliot and Anthony Purdy, *Peter Greenaway: Architecture and Allegory* (West Sussex: Academy Editions, 1997).
74. *Ibid.*, 7.
75. Kuzinar, *Queer German Cinema*, 115, 126.
76. See, for instance, the work of Bill Ashcroft, Jean-Pierre Durix, Stephen Slemon, and Aijaz Ahmad, who have theorized the uses of allegory in post-colonial literatures, as well as Frederic Jameson's overly generalized claim that all Third World literatures are by necessity allegorical. See chapters on allegory in Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation*, (Florence: Routledge, 2001) and Jean-Pierre Durix, *Mimesis, Genres, and Post-colonial Discourse: Deconstructing Magic Realism*, (London: Macmillan, 1998). See also, Stephen Slemon, "Monuments of Empire: allegory/counter-discourse/post-colonial writing", *Kunapipi* v. 9 n. 3 (1987), Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, (London: Verso, 1992) and Frederic Jameson "Third World Literature in the era of multi-national capitalism", *Social Text* 15 (fall, 1986).
77. I am thinking in particular of the films of the Brazilian Cinema Novo of the 1960s, and more recently the work of Argentinian director Fernando Solanas (*Sur*, 1988; *La Nube*, 1998); the work of little-known Indian director Kumar Shahani (*Kasba*, 1991; *Char Adhyay*, 1997, a film based on the novella by Rabindranath Tagore); the work of Hungarian director Béla Tarr

- (*Werckmeister Harmonies*, 2000); films by Senegalese director Ousmane Sembene (*Xala*, 1975; *Ceddo*, 1977 as well as his more recent *Mooladdé*, 2004) and the debut feature of Tunisian director Moufida Tlatli whose *Silences of the Palace* (1995) functions as a complex allegory of colonization and subsequent 'liberation'. This film has been the subject of some detailed and nuanced readings of its allegorical strategies. See, Gil Hochberg, "National Allegories and the Emergence of Female Voice in Moufida Tlatli's *Les silences du palais*" *Third Text* n50, (spring, 2000), 33-44 and Dorit Naaman, "Woman/Nation: A Postcolonial Look at Female Subjectivity" *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* v17 n4, (spring 2001), 333-342.
78. Films such as Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (1984) and Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* (1987) are pivotal examples from China.
 79. See Michelle Langford, "Allegory and the aesthetics of 'becoming-woman' in Marziyeh Meshkini's *The Day I Became a Woman*" *Camera Obscura* n64 (forthcoming, April, 2007)
 80. Marvin D'Lugo "Carlos Saura: Constructive Imagination in Post-Franco Cinema" *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* v8 n2 (Spring, 1983), 36. D'Lugo borrows this term from Martin Brown.
 81. *OGTD*, 192.
 82. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans., Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass. & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), N9.7, 473.
 83. "Central Park", 40.
 84. *OGTD*, 224.
 85. Jodi Brooks, "Crisis and the Everyday: Some Thoughts on Gesture and Crisis in Cassavetes and Benjamin," Lesley Stern & George Kouvaros eds., *Falling For You*, 76.
 86. Laleen Jayamanne "'Life is a Dream" – Raul Ruiz was a Surrealist in Sydney: A Capillary Memory of a Cultural Event" Laleen Jayamanne ed. *Kiss Me Deadly: Feminism and Cinema for the Moment* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1995), 250 n. 79.
 87. *Cinema 1*, 210. See also 212-215 where he discusses these characteristics with reference to specific films and directors.
 88. *Cinema 2*, 2.
 89. *Ibid.*, 4.
 90. *Ibid.*, 17.
 91. The "plausible theory of film technique" to which Adorno refers is Siegfried Kracauer's *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960). Throughout this book, Kracauer uses the terms "cinematic" and "uncinematic". Along with various other qualities, the former refers to that which instigates and prolongs movement and smooth transitions between scenes. The latter is brought about, among other things, through stasis and "stagey" performance techniques.
 92. *OGTD*, 208.
 93. *Ibid.*, 209. Emphasis added.
 94. *Ibid.*, 152.
 95. Quoted by Benjamin, *Ibid.*, 149. Through the ages melancholy was considered to be an exclusively male affliction and was linked with genius. Intense contemplation and learning were often prescribed as curatives for this affliction. In contrast, women who suffered from similar ailments were called 'hysterical' and were advised against contemplation and learning because the constitution of women was considered too fragile for such activities and might in fact worsen the condition. Instead, for married women, regular intercourse and childbirth were considered appropriate curatives. Unmarried women should simply get married. For a detailed discussion of the sexual politics of melancholy and hysteria see Laurinda S. Dixon, *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 197-220.
 96. Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in *Visual and Other Pleasures*

- (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1989), 14-28.
97. *Cinema 2*, 12.
 98. Michel Foucault speaking about Schroeter's *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* quoted in Kieth Robinson, "The Passion and the Pleasure: Foucault's Art of Not Being Oneself", *Theory, Culture & Society* v. 20 n. 2, (2003), 126.
 99. *Cinema 2*, 12-13.
 100. "Central Park", 46.
 101. Jodi Brooks, in her article "Fascination and the Grotesque: What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" focuses on the holding power of fascination, or what she terms "mimetic apprehension so as to signal the centrality of holding and being held by fascination." *Continuum*, v. 5, no. 2 (1992), 225. The idea of 'haptic fascination', which I believe Schroeter's films to involve, is inspired from Brooks' argument. But haptic fascination must be differentiated from the kind of hypnotic fascination involved in classical cinema, which attempts to grab hold of and pull the spectator along with it in its movement.
 102. *Cinema 2*, 3.
 103. Kluge, "On Film and The Public Sphere", 207.
 104. *Cinema 2*, 22.
 105. I shall elaborate upon what I wish to call 'allegorical montage' in chapter 3.
 106. See *Cinema 2*, chapter 4, "The crystals of time", 68-97.
 107. "Central Park", 40.
 108. *Cinema 2*, 133. I shall take up the notion of falsifying narration in greater detail in chapter 3.
 109. *Ibid.*, 81. This is Deleuze's interpretation of Henri Bergson's third thesis on time. Bergson's work on time, movement, perception and memory, particularly in his books *Matter and Memory*, and *Mind-Energy* underlie Deleuze's two books on the cinema, and traces of Bergson may also be found scattered through Benjamin's work.
 110. *OGTD*, 194.
 111. *Ibid.*
 112. *Ibid.*, 193.
 113. Jorge Luis Borges *Labyrinths*, (London: Penguin, 1970).
 114. *Cinema 2*, 49.
 115. One example of this mirroring process may be found in the close resemblance of each of the twin's female lovers.
 116. *OGTD*, 224.

Chapter Three

The Allegorical Tableau

"As Schroeter himself says, all his films are narrative films: he simply had the good fortune to have a grandmother who told him fairy tales."¹

In chapter eight of *Film Language*, entitled "The Modern Cinema and Narrativity", Christian Metz asks whether "the 'new cinema,' has developed beyond the stage of the *narrative*." Is the "modern film" an "absolute object, a work to be read in any direction," has it "thrown off narrativity, the earmark of the classical film?" It is with these questions that Metz takes on the "great argument of the 'breakdown of narrativity'."² Metz's article is itself an attempt to break down the "anti-narrative myth" upon which, according to him, much of the critical writing on the new cinema at that time rested.³ Metz argues against the conclusion to which much of this critical writing seems to point, namely, that "in the past the cinema was entirely narrative and no longer is so today, or is so at least to a much lesser extent." In fact, Metz asserts to the contrary "that the modern film is more narrative, and more satisfyingly so, and that the main contribution of the new cinema is to have enriched the filmic narrative."⁴

Schroeter's films do not engage in the kinds of narrativity typical of classical narrative cinema, but neither can they be called anti-narrative. Schroeter's films engage most willingly in the enrichment of filmic narrative that Metz claims for the modern cinema, but in order to understand them as narratives, the terms that are used to define narrative need to be altered. Metz appears to be arguing that narrative need not always be sensory-motor. That is, just because there appears in modern cinema to be a 'breakdown' of conventional forms of narrativity, this does not mean that new forms of narrativity may not emerge. Gilles Deleuze is able to furnish this new form of non sensory-motor narrativity with a name: He calls this "crystalline narration".⁵

As I have already demonstrated through my discussion of *Deux*, Schroeter's cinema evidences the shift identified by Deleuze from "organic narration" to "crystalline narration". According to Deleuze, "organic narration consists of the development of

sensory-motor schemata as a result of which the characters react to situations or act in such a way as to disclose the situation. This is truthful narration in the sense that it claims to be true, even in fiction."⁶ In contrast, "crystalline narration" collapses the distinction between the true and the false, the actual and virtual: "the two modes of existence are now combined in a circuit where the real and the imaginary, the actual and the virtual, chase after each other, exchange their roles and become indiscernible."⁷ "Crystalline narration implies a collapse of the sensory-motor schemata," and the overturning of chronological time for a "chronic non-chronological time which produces movements necessarily 'abnormal', essentially 'false'."⁸ Furthermore, "falsifying narration" is tied to "pure descriptions". Under these conditions time does not simply equate either with the time of the narration, the duration of shots or sequences, or even with apparatus-time. Time, rather, appears directly in the image as "*de-actualized peaks of present*", and "*virtual sheets of past*".⁹

This notion of crystalline narration is particularly important for an understanding of Schroeter's cinema, for it is at this point in *Cinema 2* that Deleuze makes his only mention of Schroeter throughout his two books on the cinema. He writes:

If there is a unity to the new German cinema – Wenders, Fassbinder, Schmid, Schroeter, or Schlöndorff – it is also here, as a result of the war, in the constantly variable link between these elements: spaces reduced to their own descriptions (city-deserts or places which are constantly being destroyed), direct presentations of an oppressive, useless and unsummonable time which haunt the characters; and from one pole to the other, the powers of the false which weave a narration, in so far as they take effect in 'false movements'.¹⁰

Schroeter's narratives unfold episodically, rather than in a single seemingly continuous thread. Organic linkages are not made between narrative events. Narratives do not flow, but arise like mini narrative events within the many tableau images that comprise his films. Narrative seems to be caught in a state of stasis within these tableaux. It is held in a state of pure potentiality, rather than seeking to provide closure or explanation. Where there are signs of narrative development such signs are themselves false movements intended to lead the narrative (and the spectator) astray.

Bill Nichols has said that (classical) cinematic narrative "approaches closer to myth than history: it seeks to resolve contradictions and provide models for action in the present."¹¹ Schroeter's cinema in contrast, as Gary Indiana has written, displays a "desire to consume myth, to exhaust it, to desecrate it",¹² just as Benjamin has commented that for Baudelaire allegory was the "antidote to myth".¹³ In fact, narratives in Schroeter's films are manifested as allegorical images, emblematic moments from which the process of production that originally produced them (the act of narration itself) has begun to disintegrate.¹⁴ Each image contains within it a narrative potential, but the connective links that would help to carry the narrative forward have been broken. Narrative remains, but only as a kind of surplus, an

excess dislodged from action; a gesture.¹⁵ Narrative, like affect loses its transitive value and collects within the image rather than forming the connective link between images.

This can be explained in another way. Traditional narrative, as Nichols reminds us, “dangles a lure before us; it promises to unfold in time, yet not run down or dissipate.”¹⁶ Schroeter’s allegorical films unfold in a far different way, with a very different relationship to time, and with no guarantee against dissipation. Walter Benjamin, discussing the parables of Franz Kafka, gives us an appropriate image with which to describe the unfolding of Schroeter’s films. He writes:

A bud unfolds into a blossom, but the boat one teaches children to make by folding paper unfolds into a flat sheet of paper. This second kind of ‘unfolding’ is really appropriate to the parable; it is the reader’s pleasure to smooth it out so that he has the meaning on the palm of his hand. Kafka’s parables, however, unfold in the first sense, the way a bud turns into a blossom.¹⁷

Schroeter’s films unfold in the manner of such a bud. It is never possible to smooth them out as one might a folded sheet of paper. This is due to the fact that they consist of multiple series of independent but interlocking tableaux which do not follow one after another but accumulate in overlapping layers, or circuits, each forming part of a different temporal series: virtual pasts, presents and futures. However, this image of a blossom cannot simply be adopted as a model for the unfolding of Schroeter’s films without modification. It is true that his films are made up of discrete but interlocking parts often collected around a figural centre, like petals clustered around a corolla. But for such an image of a blossom to be truly appropriate to Schroeter’s films, it is necessary to take this process of unfolding a little further. As allegory makes us keenly aware, a blossom is subject to the inevitable process of decay, the already fragile links that connect the petals at the centre become even weaker and are easily scattered upon the wind. So, too, are Schroeter’s films, which are constructed from the ruinous remnants of culture, subject to a similar process of decay and dispersal.

It is for this reason that Schroeter’s films have only a tentative grasp on narrative. Their more fundamental elements lie in the areas of space, which is articulated as tableau, and montage, whose emphasis lies not in organic linkages, but on the cut itself. It is, therefore, upon these respective aspects of his films that will be the focus of the following two chapters.

From ‘Narrative Space’ to ‘Tableau Space’

Thomas Elsaesser, writing generally of the films of the New German Cinema has said:

Although the New German Cinema remained throughout, and despite interesting variants, a narrative cinema, a reading of the films as narratives, and of the narratives as socially symbolic forms yields disappointing results.¹⁸

This statement could not be more true than for the films of Werner Schroeter, even though at times his films could seem more like one of those interesting variants. Narrative analysis does not provide access to the complex interplay of layers and temporal forms that are present in his films. We must therefore find another way in. Schroeter offers us many such moments throughout the course of his films, and I should like to begin this chapter with one of these moments from his 1978 film *Regno di Napoli*.

There is a moment, perhaps two-thirds of the way into the film, when we are invited behind the scenes of a curtain, billowing theatrically in the wind. This curtain is the site where the film's prostitute, Rosaria á Franches ('Franchie' for short), conducts her business. With a smiling face Franchie invites us behind the curtain along with Massimo, one of the film's main protagonists, by pulling the curtain to one side with the flourish of an outstretched arm. What she reveals is not a cavernous space behind the curtain, but rather a sheer rock face. Despite the fact that in earlier sequences we have seen Franchie and her clients enter and exit from behind the curtain, giving the impression that there is space behind it, in this later scene we discover that there is in fact no space behind the curtain at all. The limits of the diegetic space are exposed.

This lack of physical space does not simply function as a negation of space, however, for it opens up the possibility of thinking a different kind of filmic space, of space organized according to a different logic than that presented by the classical narrative cinema. This lack of space effectively complicates the function normally played by the alternation of on-screen and off-screen spaces in creating the impression of a potentially limitless fictional universe and in the construction of coherent linear narratives. The stone wall behind the curtain effectively places a limit on diegetic space, frames it by revealing its borders. Space is treated as tableau. Franchie's act of opening the curtain creates a friction between space as illusionist representation and space as a site of theatrical presentation. This friction creates disturbances within the image and allows the spectator access to the allegorical layers of the film. In some cases these layers might affect the way meaning is produced, and in others this might result in the bringing of multiple incommensurable temporalities – past, present, future – to the surface of the image.

As for Franchie's curtain in *Regno di Napoli*, it serves to activate the powers of the false. It is thanks to the powers of the false that the apparent lack of space does not slam the spectator into a stone wall, but rather invites her/him, along with Massimo, into its many allegorical folds. It is the point at which the pubescent Massimo is taught the difference between love and lust by the allegorical figure of the prostitute, who knows a thing or two about commodities, but who also functions as something of a maternal figure to him. Franchie teaches Massimo that you pay for love with pain and for lust with money, but, in the end, the difference is practically indiscernible.

At the point where the lack of space behind the curtain is revealed, the film both declares itself to be illusion, but also adds another level on which the film may be

read. It is not that the film merely becomes self-reflexive, however, and it should not be seen simply as a clever device to bring the spectator in on a joke. In fact the moment passes without the film ever drawing the spectator's attention to it. The fiction proceeds without ever being aware of this subtle but important interruption. In fact, the moment is important precisely because it rests on a point of indecidability. It becomes impossible to decide whether Schroeter is using a very subtle form of Brechtian distanciation, or whether it is simply an inadvertent accident. This indecidability, a characteristic of the crystal-image, alerts us to the fact that Schroeter's films work on several levels at once, and it is in this way that they reveal their mode of construction, a necessary aspect of the allegorical mode. The point at which the curtain reveals the lack of actual depth behind it is precisely the point at which the space becomes a tableau, a multi-layered allegorical image that can sustain multiple temporalities. Therefore, this is a very different articulation of space than that employed in classical narratives. This kind of 'tableau space' differs significantly from what Stephen Heath has theorized as "narrative space".¹⁹

Narrative Space

In his article entitled "Narrative Space", Stephen Heath discusses the integral roles played by space and narrative in classical narrative cinema, particularly for the way it helps to create a stable and centred spectatorial position.²⁰ Devices such as framing, continuity of space, unity of action, place and subject, and the foregrounding of the eye and vision according to laws of perspective founded in the Renaissance constitute the practical tools of the film-maker, producing a view that is, according to Heath, "framed, centred, harmonious".²¹ Quattrocento perspective hinges on a combination of geometry and optics, which makes it well suited to the monocular technologies of cinema. Unlike painting or photography, however, the mobility of the cinema presents a series of problems that would seem to threaten the unity of this perspectival vision. The movement of objects within the frame, as well as changes to the frame itself through camera movement and editing, present problems of composition for the cinematographic image. In addition, and most importantly according to Heath, "narrative contains the mobility that could threaten the clarity of vision in a constant renewal of perspective." "What enters cinema," writes Heath, "is a logic of movement and it is this logic that centres the frame. Frame space, in other words, is constructed as narrative space."²² Narrative, therefore, provides the motivations that require the film to shift from frame to frame and from place to place, and there are certain rules that must be followed by the cinematic operations of the film in order that the narrative may progress in a logical and unified fashion. Transitions between diverse spaces and times should not proceed arbitrarily, but should follow a causal logic provided by the narrative threads and by movement.

Narrative space came to dominate cinematic form and structure in the years following 1906 and 1907, and it largely also forms the theoretical basis of much Anglo-American and certain aspects of French investigations into cinema studies during the 1970s. Such film-theoretical discourses, which included structuralist, psychoanalytic and feminist film theories, relied upon a relatively constant notion of classical narrative cinema, which they sought to critique via a recourse to various

experimental, political or alternative film-making practices, which themselves appeared to explicitly or implicitly rupture or 'deconstruct' the classical mode. The common impetus of these different discourses lay in their attempt to reveal how classical narrative cinema functions to uphold the political and ideological status quo of capitalist society. In his famous article, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus", Jean-Louis Baudry argues that the cinema works primarily as a "psychic apparatus of substitution" in which the "instrumentation" of the apparatus normally remains hidden, or "repressed".²³ For Baudry, classical narrative cinema is an ideological system that aims to repress any disturbing elements that might threaten the unity and harmony of the whole. Films in which "disturbing cinematic elements" are unleashed, such as those found in Dziga Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929), to cite one of Baudry's own examples, present the cinematic equivalent of the "return of the repressed" coming to challenge the ideology of the system. Likewise, Laura Mulvey's work of the early 1970s aimed to show how classical narrative cinema in particular functioned to situate woman as object of, but never bearer of the gaze, a fact that that leads her to conclude that narrative cinema is ideologically questionable from a feminist perspective and should, therefore, be condemned.²⁴ Structuralist film theory argued along Marxist lines that film-makers who departed from classical means of constructing films were more able to activate the radical political potential of the medium. In doing so, the spectator, who would be forced to 'work' at the production of meaning, would no longer be constructed by the film as passive observer. For Stephen Heath, therefore, "narrative space" becomes "a crucial political avant-garde problem," and the work of Godard, Straub and Huillet, as well as certain proponents of American independent cinema such as Stan Brakhage and Michael Snow, all address this problem in a variety of different ways. According to Heath, film-makers like Godard deliberately aim to complicate the position of the subject in regard to the film, which effectively destroys the centrality of vision characteristic of classical narrative cinema and instead unleashes what he calls "a certain freedom of contradictions" into the realm of cinematic representation.²⁵

Narrative and space also constitute a crucial problem for Schroeter's cinema, but this problem cannot be reduced either to a political will on the part of the film-maker, or to a psychoanalytically conceived 'return of the repressed' into the apparatus that would seem, according to Baudry, to confirm by opposition an otherwise stable ideological system. Neither of these positions, in so far as they both set up a relatively simple polarity between continuity and rupture are able, I believe, to adequately account for Schroeter's cinematic practice. We need to find an alternative theoretical path.

Tableau Space

One such path is presented by the work of Tom Gunning, who takes us back to the very early years of the cinema in order to reappraise the importance of the non-narrative aspects of the so-called 'primitive' cinema. Gunning displaces the primacy placed on narrative by the major film theories by suggesting that alternative or avant-garde film-making practice owes more to the non-narrative elements of early cinema

that were not subsequently taken up by the narratively dominated industrial cinemas, than to a simple opposition, or reaction to those narrative practices. Gunning has attempted to reframe the historiography of early cinema, which had viewed films prior to 1906 and 1907 “primarily from the viewpoint of their contributions to film as a storytelling medium.”²⁶ Rather than theorizing early cinema as a primitive and homogeneous medium merely preparing the way for narrative film to develop, Gunning sees early cinema as a heterogeneous form dominated less by narrative and continuity of place, time and action, than by non-continuity, discontinuity and an emphasis on cinema as spectacle. In fact, he argues that until around 1906 and 1907, film production was dominated by genres such as actualities, peep show films, gag films and trick films, over those genres with more narrative underpinnings.²⁷ Gunning argues that certain aspects of what he calls the “cinema of attractions”, which could be said to “deviate” from the road towards “the classical style of continuity”, have been taken up by avant-garde cinema. Continuing, Gunning writes that it is therefore

important not to see these anomalies as primitive mistakes groping toward the later established ideal of match cutting and diegetic unity but as indications of another direction in film narrative than that of later dominant cinema, a road not taken by the major film industries.²⁸

Or, I should add, by the major film theories. I believe that the fragmentary narratives and catalogue of affects that dominate Schroeter’s cinematic practice reach their destination by following just such an alternate path. The most fundamental proof of this is the way that Schroeter treats space not as ‘narrative space’ in the classical sense, but as tableau, which enables narrative to be freed from the bounds of diegetic necessity.

I see it as no coincidence that Schroeter’s films appear to pass through a rather ‘primitive,’ or spectacle-driven phase, before developing into much more complex, although never strictly linear, narratives. However, I do not believe that these ‘narrative’ films, beginning with very fragmented narratives such as *Der Bomberpilot* and developing into much more complex narratives in films such as *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*, *Tag der Idioten*, and *Malina*, should be seen as an attempt by Schroeter to cross into the mainstream. It is true that these later films employ a great many ‘classical’ devices that work to create a diegetic unity of sorts, but I believe that these only serve to push tendencies that were already present in the ‘primitive’ films to a higher level of complexity. These tendencies, evident in his very early film, have, in fact, returned with a vengeance more recently in *Deux*. We should, therefore, following Gunning, not see Schroeter’s early films as ‘primitive’ mistakes groping towards a yet to be attained ‘ideal’, but rather to see them as engendering a very unique form of cinematic narrative. Indeed, Deleuze, following Bergson, seems to believe in the potential of the primitive. He writes; “things are never defined by their primitive state, but by the tendency concealed in this state.”²⁹

Therefore, I should like to look more closely at the different kinds of tableaux that we encounter in Schroeter’s films, from his very early ‘performance’ films to his more

complex feature films and, in doing so, demonstrate how his use of tableaux generate 'allegorical images'.

'Primitive' Tableau Space

The tableau is one of those aspects of early cinema that, according to Gunning, became submerged below the deluge of narrative outpourings after 1907. As Heath writes, "the *tableau* space of the early films is intolerable in its particular fixity." The tableau "must be broken up in the interests of the unity of action and place and subject view."³⁰ In early cinema the tableau correlates very closely with the static shot. Furthermore, the tableau is constituted not only from a cut-out section of space, but also by a determined segment of time. The autonomous tableau of early cinema is already a narrative space, but unlike linear narratives, the tableau, according to Thomas Elsaesser, has its "own narrative-dramatic momentum".³¹ The cinematic tableau is not simply a pictorial space, as it is in painting, but forms a spatio-temporal segment: any event or action that occurs within it is determined by the spatial and temporal frame that surrounds it. It is the frame that gives rise to the action; performance, or event becomes a function of the tableau and the tableau does not imply that space or action continues beyond the frame. The tableau is not a diegetic space, as it does not require causal relations to be carried between shots. It is thus that the cinematic tableau provides the appropriate conditions under which the "cinema of attractions" can be defined as an "exhibitionist cinema", a cinema of spectacle that wants to make itself seen.³² In fact, the tableau privileges a particular visible field. As Roland Barthes has written:

The tableau (pictorial, theatrical, literary) is a pure cut-out segment with clearly defined edges, irreversible and incorruptible; everything that surrounds it is banished into nothingness, remains unnamed, while everything that it admits within its field is promoted into essence, into light, into view.³³

This promotion into view is one particular characteristic of what Noël Burch has called the 'primitive mode of representation' (PMR). The PMR is characterized primarily by the use of tableau compositions, single-shot scenes, and frontal staging coupled with the performer's direct address to the audience.³⁴

Most of Schroeter's films employ many, if not all, of the characteristics of the PMR. Of particular interest at this point is his use of tableau composition and frontal staging, which, along with an emphasis on gestural modes of performance borrowed from theatre, opera and dance, enable Schroeter to articulate almost any space as a stage or performance space. These 'theatrical tableaux', which occur predominantly in his films prior to *Regno di Napoli*, serve as precursors to the more complex 'allegorical tableaux' that can be found in subsequent films.

Theatrical Tableaux

Most of Schroeter's films up to and including *Flocons d'or* are oriented more toward performance and spectacle than toward developing story and characterization. They proceed via a series of relatively autonomous tableaux that *show* rather than *narrate*

events. In this respect they refer in many ways to the PMR. However, in doing so, they should not be simply regarded as retrogressive, for neither is the PMR adopted entirely, nor to the same ends. By adopting certain formal characteristics of the PMR, Schroeter is able to invest his cinema with a kind of theatricality, but this theatricality does not simply reduce his cinema to a version of filmed theatre or an attempt to reproduce the proscenium stage.³⁵

We may explore Schroeter's use of the theatrical tableau by examining films such as *Neurasia*, *Eika Katappa* and certain scenes of *Der Bomberpilot*. The most obvious instances of the theatrical tableau appear when action takes place on an actual stage or in front of an audience. In such cases the tableau is constructed by the external agency of the camera's framings and re-framings and by the frontality of the staging either towards the camera or towards an implied audience, rather than by the framing arch of the proscenium itself. In fact sometimes the stage is merely implied by the presence of a curtain behind the performer, such as in the *La Traviata* sequences of *Eika Katappa* where Gisela Trowe mimes to various arias from Verdi's opera in front of a theatrical curtain dramatically lit with a bright red light. In fact, the red curtain in the scene from *Regno di Napoli* discussed earlier functions as just such a theatrical tableau. In *Der Bomberpilot*, canned applause is used to imply an audience in several scenes in which the film's three female protagonists perform their variety acts. In both of these examples, which are not staged frontally towards the camera but towards an implied audience, the tableau effect is achieved thanks to the particularly 'stagey' modes of performance and the use of unsynchronized sound which, along with static framing and lack of causal links between scenes, serve to extract each scene as an autonomous spatiotemporal segment. Such segments function less as actual theatrical or operatic performances than as quotations of such performances and are therefore imbued with a certain fascination with spectacle that is reminiscent of the primitive mode of representation.

These scenes of staged theatricality are complemented by *Der Bomberpilot*'s many other more 'primitively' composed tableaux. These consist simply of the characters adopting a pose in front of the camera as though posing for a photograph. The static position of the camera is doubled by the stasis of the held pose of the characters. This snapshot technique aids in the mode of reminiscence in which the film partakes. As I will discuss in chapter five, *Der Bomberpilot* engages in a kind of faulty remembering, or "falsifying narration" aided largely by the gestural performances of the characters and the voice-over narration. These posed tableaux are not simply memories or snapshots, however, for they picture the very act of bringing such a trigger of remembrance into being. On one level therefore, they seem to take place in the present, in the same moment as the snapshot is taken, but on another level they are already of the past, marked by the past tense of the voice-over narration.

While *Der Bomberpilot* is punctuated only intermittently with such staged scenes imbedded in a loose narrative context, *Neurasia* takes place entirely within a small auditorium and has no narrative logic with which to bind its disjointed series of

tableau scenes together. Throughout the film, the camera remains relatively static for each tableau shot, making only slight readjustments to centre the group of performers in the frame. From scene to scene the position of the camera is adjusted slightly, although it always remains integral to the frontal staging of the performances, often even adopting the viewpoint of a spectator in the auditorium, although never in the sense that such a viewpoint can be attached to an actual subject. The theatricality of the tableaux is heightened further by the use of strong footlights, which not only serve to highlight the performers, but project large shadows of them onto the wall behind. This makes the viewer particularly aware of the limits of the stage/tableau space, causes the spatial depth to become flattened and restricts the parameters of the performances to the visible limits of the tableau. The poses and gestures of each performer are for the most part emphatically minimal and slowly executed, and throughout the film they are grouped and regrouped in various tableau arrangements. As Sebastian Feldmann has pointed out, these arrangements of figures, which are often triangular in structure, serve to give the images a highly composed appearance.³⁶ The very composed nature of the images and stylized (but also faltering) movements of the figures, accompanied by post-dubbed music that is never quite synchronized with the images and whose rhythm sometimes appears in complete contradiction to the gestures, serves to render each tableau as a quotation of certain cultural forms (social, ritual, theatrical, musical), rather than as a faithful representation of those forms themselves. As quotations, these decontextualized fragments lose any specific significance that they might once have had in a particular ritualistic or social context. Furthermore, the somewhat faltering or faulty rehearsal of these gestures seems to push the film into the territory of allegory as each tableau bears witness to the inevitable decay of those cultural forms in the late twentieth century.

The decay and disconnection from tradition that Schroeter locates in the ritual, theatrical and gestural tableaux of *Neurasia* enables him, in later films, to detach the theatrical tableau from its origin in staged performance. In further scenes in *Eika Katappa*, for instance, Schroeter is able to turn almost any space into a theatrical tableau. Transitional spaces such as outdoor amphitheatres and ruins are variously used for scenes ranging from fragments of the Nibelungen Saga, to *Tosca* and *Rigoletto*, and the reunion of two lovers who dance a waltz. True to the staged tableaux of *Neurasia*, these scenes are frontally staged and form autonomous fragments, which appear quite literally to be scattered throughout the film with no single connective logic to thread them together. *Deux* also employs a variety of literally and figuratively staged tableaux. These scenes are frequently linked to 'Maria', one of the two characters played by Isabelle Huppert. Throughout the film she inhabits a variety of theatrical spaces, from performing in a nightclub to singing opera in her singing teacher's studio, to awkwardly dancing on stage in a theatre inhabited by a man who refuses to allow her to leave. These moments appear to represent alternate destinies for 'Maria', but this final one appears to have her 'locked up' in the closing credit sequence of the film where she continues to dance and dance as the curtain repeatedly closes and rises, rendering the scene as a kind of endlessly repeatable encore performance.

In the sixth part of *Eika Katappa*, Schroeter presents several non-sequential and non-chronological scenes from Puccini's opera *Tosca*, beginning at the end with Tosca's suicide. In one particular episode we can see how the image is treated as tableau not only through compositional and framing devices – the figures of Tosca and Scarpia are framed within the architrave of a ruined building – but also by the holding of poses at the beginning and end of the scene. At the beginning, the figures appear to wait for their cue before commencing their action and, at the end, after killing Scarpia, Tosca pauses as if awaiting the direction to cut. The posed figure serves to open and close the temporal dimension or duration of the tableau. Narrative does not flow from such spatio-temporal framings, but rather resides within its bounds. In terms of the narrative of Puccini's opera, this particular scene from *Eika Katappa* is merely a sketch of the final scene of Act II. Tosca's motivations for killing Scarpia are not provided; the film does not narrate the story; space is not transformed into place; action does not *take place* in Scarpia's quarters in the Farnese Palace in Rome. Only the soundtrack, upon which we hear the corresponding duet, provides the spectator with the appropriate tools with which to decipher the scene. In much the same way as in early filmed passion plays, the spectator's foreknowledge of a story or a text is required to make sense of the individual tableau scenes.

Yet further tableau scenes can be found in *Eika Katappa* which are not presented with any actual or implied reference to a theatrical space, and also do not condense a pre-existing text or story into a single emblematic moment. Many of these tableaux are death scenes and are scattered throughout the film. They occur in open spaces: several on roadways and one in a park. Some of these death scenes involve figures staggering along lonely country roads, emerging from the depth of the image to finally collapse right in front of the camera. In each case, not only are there no causal connection between one scene and the next, there is also no cause and effect relationship between the space and the death that occurs within it. In contrast to the scene from *Tosca* discussed above where the composition, framing and posing of figures within the image together contributed to the tableau effect, in these open spaces, it is the trajectory of the performance itself which brings the tableau into being, in each case the figure coming to their final resting place in front of the camera. In these cases the tableau, which is comprised of a single shot with minimal movements of the camera, is still reminiscent of the PMR. However, the traversal of space by a figure, the use of depth of field and an emphatic use of extended duration significantly widens the spatio-temporal frame and causes the unity of the tableau to begin to disperse. In such cases it is time that begins to rise to the surface of the image.

Temporal Tableaux

There is one further tableau from *Eika Katappa* that I should like to discuss here, for although it involves a single static shot, it prefigures the much more complex temporal structures that are to be found in Schroeter's later 'narrative' films. Like the fragmented scenes from operas, this tableau is extracted from a larger narrative context, which relies upon the spectator's foreknowledge of the story. This is the

Nibelungen Saga, the famous Nordic legend of the fateful love between the heroic warrior Siegfried and the beautiful Kriemhild. Schroeter relies not only upon the spectator's familiarity with the story gained through the legend itself, but through its adaptations in various cultural products. These include Wagner's opera and Fritz Lang's silent epic *Die Nibelungen* (1922–24). It is largely through costume, familiar from both the opera and the film, that the legend is evoked. Magdalena Montezuma can be recognized as Kriemhild through her costume consisting of a long flowing gown with wide billowing sleeves and two long blonde braids that frame her face.

Various tableaux from this story make up the entire second part of the film. In the very first tableau of the episode, we see the steep stone steps of an outdoor amphitheatre, which is framed in such a way that they fill the entire image. The base of the stairs cannot be seen at this point and a light mist further helps to enclose the image within the frame. In long shot we see Kriemhild descend the stairs in a hurried manner, from time to time gesturing histrionically. She appears to be hurrying, but her descent and traversal of the grassy field seems long and protracted. The scene lasts for almost a minute and a half, but the duration of the scene provides only one part of its temporal effect. The architecture of the space and the use of depth of field work together to collapse all sense of distance or perspective, effectively flattening out the image. The stairs seem to rise not into the distance, but vertically, parallel to the two-dimensional picture plane. Instead of appearing to come toward the camera, Kriemhild literally descends from the top of the image to the bottom. Once she reaches the bottom of the staircase/image, the camera zooms out to reveal what appears to be a shallow grassy field. Once again, however, through the use of depth of field, distance is collapsed and the background is brought closer to the foreground. Kriemhild rushes toward the camera, but it seems to take her longer to traverse the field than it should. The treatment of space seems to grate against the hurried pace of Kriemhild's gestures. Her movement through space is impeded not physically, but by the image itself through the suppression and compression of depth. This sets up a tension between space, time and movement. Time is dislodged from movement, no longer subordinate to movement as Deleuze might say. Space is contracted while time is protracted, and by the time Kriemhild finally reaches the camera, the point of her rush toward it appears to have been forgotten.

Schroeter does not present the Siegfried and Kriemhild legend as a chronological series of events, but rather as fragmentary recollections of that story. The non-chronological structure of the episode refers us to Bergson's conception of memory and non-chronological time upon which Deleuze bases chapter five of *Cinema 2* entitled "Peaks of present and sheets of past". For Bergson, as Deleuze points out, "Memory is not in us; it is we who move in a Being-memory, a world-memory."³⁷ This form of memory is temporal in the sense that, in searching for a recollection we must put ourselves into the past. This can happen in two ways: either by evoking a recollection from the present (which is itself not a fixed point but a continually passing present), or by exploring a sheet of past from which recollections will then arise. The past in this sense, writes Deleuze, can be conceived

as the coexistence of circles which are more or less dilated or contracted, each one of which contains everything at the same time and the present of which is the extreme limit...all the circles of the past constituting so many stretched or shrunk regions, strata, and sheets.³⁸

Deleuze continues:

What happens when we search for a recollection? We have to put ourselves into the past in general, then we have to choose between the regions: in which one do we think that the recollection is hidden, huddled up waiting for us and evading us?...We have to jump into a chosen region, even if we have to return to the present in order to make another jump...³⁹

It is this kind of recollection and its variations that Deleuze finds in the cinema of Resnais, Robbe-Grillet and Orson Welles, and it is here that he finds "two opposed conceptions of time which crash into each other." These are: "The coexistence of sheets of virtual past, and the simultaneity of peaks of deactualised present" which "are the two direct signs of time itself."⁴⁰ Furthermore, Deleuze considers Welles' innovations in the use of depth of field to have created a kind of time-image consistent with this notion of time and memory. This is a very specialized use of depth of field, which is often effected along a diagonal or through a gap, in which the background and the foreground are brought into direct contact and allowed to interact.⁴¹ In such cases, spatial relations are transformed into temporal relations, with each plane of the image forming a sheet of past. This is, writes Deleuze, "depth of time and no longer of space." Equally, however, there are "time-images which are formed through a suppression of depth", and this suppression of depth functions like a "contracted present" from which an evocation may proceed.⁴²

The tableau scene from *Eika Katappa* described above functions in this way, as an evocation, not so much as an actual recollection, but as a virtual recollection of the Nordic legend and the various cultural forms in which it has been presented. This gives a new value to narration, which coincides with the notion of the unfolding bud and involves not leaping into one region of past and then back to the present, but rather of leaping from one sheet or petal to the next without returning to our original point of departure from which the act of evocation began. Schroeter's films tend to be dominated by these recollection-images and usually contain no 'present' from which such recollections depart. This form of non-chronological narration allows us to say of the sequence that Kriemhild's purpose was not lost, but that perhaps she arrived too late to save her beloved Siegfried or because she chose to descend into the wrong region of past, a region in which his recollection-image could not be found.

The 'Tableauisation' of Space

Unlike the tableau of early cinema, the spatio-temporal segmentation that constitutes the tableaux in Schroeter's later films cannot always be equated with the shot and its duration, or the simple playing out of a scene in front of the camera. The

composition of the *mise en scène*, framing devices of and in the image, and the pace, postures and attitudes adopted by the performers all play an important part in what Jodi Brooks has called the 'tableauisation' of space,⁴³ ultimately enabling entire edited sequences to function as tableaux. While the earlier tableaux largely derive their allegorical potential from their status as independent fragments disconnected from their original social or narrative contexts, it is within these new edited tableaux that we can begin to see the 'allegorical image' emerge as a force serving to break the compositional unity of the scene apart, so that it can function simultaneously on a variety of different semantic levels as well as serving to bifurcate or fragment time itself, giving rise to truly allegorical tableaux.

This more complex form of allegorical tableau may be illustrated with a scene from Schroeter's 1980 film *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*. The scene opens with the camera looking diagonally across a pool table in a bar. In the far corner, centre frame, there are two young men playing a computer game. From screen left, Nicola, the film's main protagonist, enters and goes to talk to the two young men. They begin to chat with Nicola about what they did the previous night. Along with the sound of the computer game and the young men's voices, we can hear in the background the agitated voices of a woman and a boy who appear to be arguing. Suddenly, Nicola appears to take notice of these voices, first turning his head toward screen left and then running in the direction of his gaze. The camera pans left to follow Nicola's movements. We now see a woman and a young boy sitting at a table. To the right of them we see a telephone booth. For a few moments Nicola stands in front of them before asking the woman what is wrong. A male voice calls from off-screen, "Has my brother called yet?" The phone rings and the man, whose voice we have just heard, runs in from screen left to answer it. He exchanges a few words with the person on the phone and then passes the phone to the woman, who is followed into the booth by the boy. The camera has by now begun to slowly zoom in closer to the scene in the phone booth, but Nicola can still be seen at the very left of the frame. He leans forward slightly so that he might listen to the conversation. At this point the scene begins to cut back and forth between the scene in the phone booth and the young men, who have been joined by the man who answered the phone and are now playing pool. With each edit, the sound levels adjust slightly to push the off-screen voices into the background thus foregrounding the relevant on-screen voices. This edited sequence is made up of a variety of close-ups and medium shots. At the end of the telephone conversation, the woman and boy emerge from the telephone booth, and the woman paces back and forth in front of it for a few moments. The scene cuts back to the men at the pool table, who have been arguing for some time, but beneath their voices we can hear the woman singing from beyond the frame. The film cuts back to the woman, who is now leaning against a table, and her voice is brought to the foreground, while the men (who are now off-screen) can only be heard faintly in the background. After a few seconds, however, they become silent and after a few more seconds they enter the frame. They stand against the wall to listen to the woman's sad song. Nicola also listens, watching from screen left. In the final shot, a reverse shot of the scene, we see Nicola in medium close-up with his head tilted slightly to his left and his gaze tended in the direction of the woman,



Palermo oder Wolfsburg 1980. © Werner Schroeter

listening intently to her sad song. Her voice can still be faintly heard as the scene ends. The film cuts to the next scene.

In cinematic terms, this scene is far removed from the static tableau shots of early cinema. In fact, it could be considered a highly articulate example of 'narrative space', involving devices such as parallel editing, camera movement, movement of characters into and out of the frame, directional looks and alternations between adjacent on-screen and off-screen spaces, which involve not only re-framings of the image but of sound as well. Despite the use of such devices, there is something about the composition and use of space in this scene that cannot simply be equated with 'narrative space'. Rather, what I see as the major achievement of this scene is that, despite its adherence to certain classical rules of continuity, space is treated not simply as a place in which to forward a narrative, but is treated as a very complex tableau, an allegorical image that can be read on a number of different levels. The scene described above is a very complex example of the way certain forces within the image can result in the 'tableauisation' of space. Therefore, we must leave this scene momentarily so that the theoretical ground for this concept may be laid down.

For Roland Barthes the tableau is a fragment, a fragment that has been removed from any particular spatial or temporal context. This fragment, however, as we know



Palermo oder Wolfsburg 1980. © Werner Schroeter

from early cinema can take on qualities of wholeness and unity in itself, working as an autonomous narrative space. This is, according to Barthes, how the Enlightenment writer Diderot conceived of the tableau. For Diderot, writes Barthes, the tableau is a “well-composed picture” within which the whole is “contained under a single point of view.”⁴⁴ This conception of the tableau in terms of wholeness and unity of composition equates very well with the tableau space of early cinema, with its singular centralizing frame, homogenization of space and unity of action. But in considering the epic theatre of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht and films of the Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein, Barthes is able to conceive of a much more modern tableau which is marked by fragmentation and dispersal of the tableau itself.

In Brecht and Eisenstein, in contrast with Diderot, ‘point of view’ equates less with the visual relationship between image, frame and viewer than with the social or political ‘gest’ which is set out within the scene or shot.⁴⁵ The tableau, therefore, is produced through much more conceptual means, and its claim to wholeness or unity is no longer so literal. A close-up of a face, of a hand, or of a piece of machinery in Eisenstein can produce a tableau. “The epic scene in Brecht, the shot in Eisenstein are so many tableaux; they are scenes which are *laid* out (in the sense in which one says *the table is laid*.)”⁴⁶ Barthes continues:

Doubtless there would be no difficulty in finding in post-Brechtian theatre and post-Eisensteinian cinema *mise en scène* marked by the dispersion of the tableau, the pulling to pieces of the 'composition', the setting in movement of the 'partial organs' of the human figure...⁴⁷

This dispersion or pulling to pieces of the composition and setting in motion of parts of the human figure in the tableau should not, however, be equated with the way classical narrative cinema requires the tableau to be broken up in the interests of narrative continuity, but rather that the tableau itself becomes a kind of "dynamic unit". Jodi Brooks takes this idea further. She writes:

The idea of the static shot – especially the tableau shot (and in many ways what is involved is a process of tableauisation) – has to be reconceived as an already dynamic unit, where constancy of framing and the stasis of the figures produces a tension which can be volatile, for there is already a staging of conflicts and tensions in the shot itself.⁴⁸

According to Brooks, the tableau, or "scene-shot", as she prefers to call it, creates a field in which and on which certain forms of cinematic disturbance may work. These disturbances or tensions might be set in motion by the suspension of a gesture or the 'hold' of a pose by a figure, by other elements of the *mise en scène* such as lighting and decor, or by the multiple forms of framing and reframing that can take place within a shot, through internal frames such as doorways and windows, or by the positioning of bodies in relation to each other. The tableau or scene-shot is not determined by its place in a sequence of shots, for it functions independently of them and it can bring forth a spatio-temporal disturbance in the unfolding of both narrative and apparatus time. Furthermore, building upon Brooks' conception of the tableau, I believe that with the introduction of such disturbances that place a hold on action, it is not even necessary to confine the tableau to the static shot, but that this conception can be broadened to include entire edited sequences and shots that involve complex camera movements such as the one described above from *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*. The tableau, according to Brooks, produces its own "field of play" or "temporal field" which cannot be reduced to the duration of the shot, but involves the "production of periods, periods of drama."⁴⁹ Both framings of the image, and re-framings within the image, as well as the pose of a figure (which is itself a kind of 'framing') can work to open and intensify a spatio-temporal period.

Indeed, Barthes also wrote of the tableau as the site of just such a spatio-temporal opening. The pictorial tableau represents a kind of "perfect instant" in which the painter must "immobilise on the canvas" the story that he wishes to tell. Barthes writes:

Necessarily total, this instant will be artificial (unreal; this is not a realist art), a hieroglyph in which can be read at a single glance (at one grasp, if we think in terms of theatre and cinema) the present, the past and the future; that is, the historical meaning of the represented action.⁵⁰

In the tableau, this 'instant' does not represent an instant among others in the flow of time (continuous succession of moments), but is rather an instant extracted from time, and time collects within it, it is an instant distended with time. As an hieroglyph, this instant is not meant to be read as one reads words on a page, but as a single immanent image containing all past, present and future possibilities. In this respect it is also an allegorical image.⁵¹ Barthes continues his discussion of the tableau by relating its ability to open a temporal period or instant to Lessing's notion of the pregnant moment, which he calls the "presence of all the absences (memories, lessons, promises) to whose rhythm History becomes both intelligible and desirable."⁵² It is a kind of depository of all that disperses with the passing of time, but without which history remains indecipherable. This moment suspends the inexorable passing of time so that connections can be made between disparate 'regions of past'.

Timothy Corrigan sees in Schroeter's frequent use of the bucolic interlude a similar possibility of stemming the flow of time and narrative. Corrigan calls these moments "pastoral instants", a term he derives from Susan Sontag's notion of the 'urban pastoral' in her "Notes on Camp".⁵³ For Corrigan, who seems to touch upon the eternal fleetingness of allegory, these moments are important to Schroeter's articulation of history not as a grand narrative but as moments in quotation marks which are "forever retrievable" but only in the form of rather material images, "like the aria on a scratched record that marks the excess of passion as a moment lost."⁵⁴

But Schroeter's cinema frequently also works in more subtle ways. Like the pastoral instant or the pregnant moment, the held pose can work to 'tableau' an image or a scene, thereby filling it with time, time as the locus of memory, knowledge or possibility. It is very much a 'time-image' in Deleuze's sense of the term. Like the gest, which, as we will see in chapter six, according to Deleuze, "puts time into the body", the suspended posture puts time into the tableau. The held posture suspends action time and apparatus time so as to bring the tableau – which forms its own independent temporal region – into being.⁵⁵

It is thus that a 'conceptual' or allegorical (rather than simply representational) tableau may be brought about through a pose or the suspension of a gesture. This is very similar to the way a street performer might draw a "conceptual or cognitive 'frame'" around an area of pavement, "bestowing a special performing significance on all the people or objects that came inside."⁵⁶ In Schroeter's cinema, it is more often the stasis of bodies within an image itself than the stasis of the camera, which brings the tableau into being. Rather than being imposed externally upon the image by the frame and stasis of the camera, these cinematic tableaux are framed from within by performance and *mise en scène*. It is this act of conceptual framing that Jodi Brooks refers to when she writes, "the posed figure can, through its hold on movement, 'tableau' the whole image."⁵⁷ Schroeter's films are littered with precisely this kind of conceptual framing.

To take only one example before returning to our scene from *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*, we might look at a scene from Schroeter's 1978 film *Regno di Napoli*. It occurs during

the episode that is introduced with the date 1946. Mrs Cavioli has prostituted her daughter Rosa to an American sailor for a sack of flour. While the sailor leads Rosa to the bedroom, Mrs Cavioli looks upon the scene with an unrepentant glare. The scene cuts back and forth several times between Rosa and the sailor and Mrs Cavioli. Before the scene closes, we see Mrs Cavioli's hand slowly and deliberately reach down and firmly grasp the sack of flour upon which 'USA' is stamped in bold lettering. The emphatic nature of her gesture is reinforced by the fact that she becomes immobilized in this pose, the camera lingering for several seconds as if waiting for her movement to recommence, but it does not; it cannot. The pose is held too long for motion to logically recommence, its sensory-motor links have begun to decay, and the only thing for the film to do is to cut to the next scene. Mrs Cavioli's pose effectively 'tableaus' the entire scene, framed by her 'hold' on the sack of flour. The resulting tableau then becomes an image to be read by the spectator. The sack of flour, one of life's basic necessities, becomes Mrs Cavioli's individual justification for prostituting her daughter, but this small sack of flour also has significance on a much broader level, referring to a much larger social and historical situation. Just as the sack of flour is 'sold' at a wildly inflated price, this single image becomes the container of the social contradictions brought about by the allied liberation of Italy from fascism, which along with liberation also involved the taking of certain liberties. This wider, historical layer of the image is emphasized further by the soundtrack where we hear a folk song telling of a girl, much like Rosa, who becomes pregnant to her American GI, and subsequently gives birth to a black baby. The various layers of history – 'official' history, personal history, social history, folk history – coincide in this tableau, which also functions as a kind of social gest, in the Brechtian sense of the term.⁵⁸

As I have shown with the above example, Schroeter is able to 'tableau' a scene by the pausing or holding of a gesture that frames the image from within. In doing so, a spatio-temporal section is sliced away from the flow of diegetic time, thus creating an "artificial" instant in which many layers may be read "at one grasp".

This 'tableauisation' of the image is effected in an even more complex way in the sequence from *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* that I described above. In this sequence, it is not simply the pause of one figure or a single gesture that works to 'tableau' the scene, but involves the combination of several forces. To begin with, it is not a narrative sequence in the conventional sense. It forms one episode of many in a fragmentary episodic narrative. The links that hold these episodes in the chain are fragile, but like the episodes of Christ's Passion that form the subject matter of medieval passion plays and numerous early films, there is a single character who serves as the connective link and who grants the film the kind of "sluggish continuity" which Gunning has attributed to the early filmed passion plays.⁵⁹ Nicola, a young Sicilian man, whose father is an alcoholic, has decided to leave Palermo to seek his fortune as a guest worker in Germany. The first third of the film consists of Nicola visiting various people and places in his hometown; watching, listening and collecting advice, stories, memories and impressions. Nicola rarely speaks, allowing others to do the talking. In fact, at times, he seems to be but a spectator of, rather

than participant in the world around him. He is very much one of those characters representative of the new cinema who, as Deleuze says, record rather than react.⁶⁰ The sequence described above is just one of these episodes which, rather than appearing to follow one after the other in a logical sequence of events, seem to accumulate in a complex series of layers.

Despite Schroeter's use of fairly conventional editing devices within the described sequence from *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*, the tableau effect works most overwhelmingly upon the image. To begin with, the sequence functions as an isolated segment, an episode. The sequences that precede and follow it do not do so according to the logic of action; transitions are not made from one to the next. This is the first factor that contributes to the 'tableauisation' of the sequence. The second factor involves the positioning of the camera, which seems to pivot from approximately the same position throughout. All camera movements and cuts to close-up are articulated from this single, objective point of view, except, of course, for the final shot of Nicola, which is shot from a reverse angle. So, even though the camera is involved in cutting up and re-framing the image, it does so on a parallel axis to the picture plane. This results in a certain flattening of the visual field, which literally treats the space as a picture or tableau.

The visual flattening is counterbalanced by certain forces within the image that create disturbances and split it into several allegorical layers, effectively opening up the conceptual field of play to a kind of conceptual depth of field. These disturbances are at work simultaneously in the *mise en scène*, on the soundtrack and in the performances. Schroeter does not use a master shot to establish the scene, but separates the tableau into two adjacent halves, between which he alternates firstly by camera movement and, secondly, through editing. Various framing devices within the *mise en scène* work to further fragment the tableau. The first half consists of a shot diagonally across a pool table into the corner of the bar where the two young men are playing a computer game. Nicola's entry into the shot from screen left is impeded by the pool table which forces him to pass directly in front of the camera to the opposite edge of the frame in order to reach the two men in the depth of the shot. Throughout the sequence Nicola will be frequently pushed to the very edge of the frame. The second half of the tableau is divided into two distinct regions. On the left of the image is a table and some chairs and on the right is a telephone booth, which later becomes a kind of tableau within the tableau. The dramatic field of this half of the tableau is intensified further by the use of strong lighting, which initially casts deep shadows of Nicola, the woman and the boy onto the wall behind, and later serves to highlight the woman's face as she sings and further helps to tableau the scene by turning it into a performance space, highly reminiscent of those performance spaces found in Schroeter's earlier films.

The layering of sound is also used to slice the tableau into various sheets, but it seems to seep through separate sheets to create moments of contact between them. Rather than simply using parallel editing as a means of showing simultaneous events in adjacent spaces, with the help of the soundtrack, the alternations between the two

halves of the tableau function more like the way pulling focus in a sequence shot might serve to draw attention to a particular area of the shot, while not completely erasing that which is shifted out of focus. In this case, sound – arguing voices or the woman’s song – attains an almost magnetic influence over the images, as it is either pulled to the foreground or pushed into the background. The tableau, which we never see as a whole, is held together by the soundtrack, which seems to form undulating layers that overlap but never directly coincide. There are, nevertheless, thematic links between these layers. Nicola’s decision (made earlier in the film) to become a guest worker in Germany forms that thematic link, although his decision is never directly addressed within this tableau sequence. Instead, one of the young men playing the computer game in the bar (after telling Nicola that they “had their way with some girls” the night before) mentions that his father has been injured in an accident in Leverkusen. At this point the young man’s story is interrupted and Nicola’s attention is drawn away by the raised voices of the woman and boy who can be heard arguing off-screen. As if those sounds contained some magnetic force, Nicola’s gaze, followed closely by his body, is drawn to the location of the sound. The camera also follows. The woman and boy become silent, but a man’s voice intrudes from off-screen asking, “has my brother called yet?” Almost before the woman can answer “no”, the phone rings and the man runs into frame to answer the phone. After a brief exchange between the man and the caller, the woman and boy gather in the phone booth, the woman swiftly taking the receiver from the man who exits the scene. She asks the caller (her husband) why he has not phoned and why he has not sent any money. The camera begins to draw in closer to the scene, and, Nicola, who stands outside of the phone booth, leans in to listen. At this point, the film cuts back to the adjacent space. The two young men from the opening shot have been joined by the man who answered the phone. He says he has been waiting for a call from his brother, who had promised to find work for him in Germany. The scene cuts back to the phone booth, where the woman passes the receiver to her son, who proceeds to recite a poem to his father expressing the fact that he will still love him even though distance and time have made them strangers. We then see the three men arguing about the pros and cons of working in Germany. One of them does not want to become a “slave to capitalism” while the other argues that in Sicily one can barely earn enough to live on. The scene cuts back and forth between the two halves of the tableau several more times until the voice of the woman singing a sad folk song about lost love and broken hearts, seems to have the most magnetic force of all, first by silencing the young men, and, then, by drawing them into her half of the tableau.

Beyond *mise en scène* and sound, it is the bodies of the performers that ultimately work most effectively to tableau the scene and draw our attention to the temporal and allegorical forces at work within it. The episode is punctuated by moments of stasis. Nicola pauses with his back to the camera in front of the boy and his mother after being attracted by their argument. He is only released from this pose by the intrusion of a voice from off-screen. While the boy and his mother talk on the phone, Nicola stands poised just outside the phone booth, leaning inwards a little to listen to the conversation. This image of Nicola listening helps to foreground the act of listening for the spectator and invites us to also turn our ears toward the image.

It is the woman, however, who finally puts the greatest hold upon the scene. Upon completing her telephone conversation, which had been angry and punctuated with highly animated gesticulations consistent with a very stereotypical image of southern Europeans, the entire attitude of the woman's body changes. She paces silently and slowly back and forth in front of the telephone booth several times and then comes to rest on the edge of the table. She begins to sing her sad folk song about love, loss and longing: "do not be like the waves" she sings, "stay always by me." It is here that the simultaneous layers of the image seem to condense and become charged with a theatrical energy that further works to 'tableau' the scene. Moments after the woman begins her song the young men, who can still be heard arguing, become silent. After a few more seconds they enter the scene and pause to listen to her song. As she sings, the woman turns her head slightly toward them, acknowledging them as her audience, drawing them into the conceptual frame that turns her seemingly spontaneous song into a performance, and the space into her stage. The strong light that had previously cast shadows upon the wall, reminiscent of those shadows in *Neurasia*, now becomes a spotlight, highlighting her performance yet further. Nicola himself then completes the frame by looking on silently from the very edge of the shot. The final shot of the sequence, which is held for around eight seconds, is a close-up of Nicola with his head tilted to one side, gazing intently upon the scene before him.

Deleuze has written of Antonioni's obsessive framing: "The pre-existing frame produces a detachment in the character, who watches himself act."⁶¹ This is pertinent here. The final shot of Nicola effectively functions to distance him from the scene, and I believe it provides the spectator access to the allegorical layers of the image. Throughout the sequence, Nicola seems to pass from being a participant in the scene (conversing with the two young men at the beginning) to becoming merely an observer of it (as looking and listening become foregrounded through composition and gesture). He inhabits an indeterminate region between the various layers of the tableau. The entire tableau can be read as Nicola's internal struggle with his decision to become a guest worker in Germany. Each layer, as it presents a different view of the guest worker experience, constitutes a region of Nicola's virtual past, present and future, which overlap and inflect one another. The economic or social gains are weighed against the risk of becoming a 'slave to capitalism'. Are his hopes and expectations realistic, or are they merely grand illusions? What if he is injured so far from home, and what will become of his family to whom he will inevitably become a stranger? The tableau effectively functions as a kind of internal monologue in images and sound, where Nicola's private struggle is evoked through the experiences of others without him ever needing to speak. It is an allegorical image because in it the sorrowful past of those who have gone before him arrives to lay claim upon Nicola's future.⁶² The dispersed elements of the tableau fade in and out like shards of memory, like history repeating itself. Despite the use of classical editing devices, the spectator is not presented with a story to follow, but an allegorical image that must be read.

The allegorical tableau provides an appropriate field of play in which Schroeter is able to produce moments of intense dramatic effect that disperse the unity of a scene

to create a multi-layered image that provides the viewer access to the numerous stratigraphic layers of time, memory, as well as narrative.

The tableau in its various manifestations is the first fundamental aspect of Schroeter's allegorical cinema. Whether through the use of literally static shots in his earlier films, or through the more complex 'tableauisation' of space in his later films, we are presented with narratives that do not conform to codes of classic continuity, but to a series of fragmentary narratives that mark their own mode of construction in a way highly reminiscent of the baroque allegories of the seventeenth century. In addition, Schroeter's allegorical tableaux are capable of sustaining multiple temporalities and, therefore, of inviting the viewer to reflect upon how the past frequently inflects the present and future. The next fundamental element of Schroeter's allegorical cinema, which continues this process of fragmentation, is montage. It is to this that I shall turn in my next chapter.

Notes

1. Gary Indiana, "Scattered Pictures: The Movies of Werner Schroeter", *Artforum*, n. 20 (March 1982), 50.
2. Christian Metz, "The Modern Cinema and Narrativity", *Film Language* (Oxford University Press, 1974), 185. The "new" or "modern" cinema to which Metz refers is generally the same as the post-Second World War cinema that Deleuze also calls "modern cinema". This is the cinema of such directors as Godard, Resnais, Antonioni, Pasolini, Welles, Bergman and Agnès Varda, and to which Schroeter also certainly belongs.
3. *Ibid.*, 188. The film critics with whom Metz takes issue include René Gilson, Marcel Mardore, Pierre Billard and Marcel Martin.
4. *Ibid.*, 208.
5. *Cinema 2*, 127.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, 128-129.
9. *Ibid.*, 130.
10. *Ibid.*, 136.
11. Bill Nichols, *Ideology and the Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 76.
12. Gary Indiana, "Scattered Pictures", 46.
13. "Central Park", 46.
14. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 366, J78,4. Benjamin describes Baroque emblems as "half finished products which, from the phases of a production process, have been converted into monuments to the process of destruction." By quoting a passage from Marx's *Das Kapital* regarding the imperative of continuity in the process of production in the factory, Benjamin seems to be suggesting, as he had in "Central Park", that allegory contains the potential to interrupt the processes of production.
15. This is Roland Barthes' definition of gesture, which I will discuss in chapter 5.
16. Nichols, *Ideology and the Image*, 74.
17. Walter Benjamin, "Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of His Death", *Illuminations*, 118.
18. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 40.
19. Heath, "Narrative Space", in *Questions of Cinema* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981).
20. While I am aware that the term 'classical narrative cinema' is problematic, I use it to indicate an 'ideal' form of cinema which relates not only, historically, to Hollywood cinema of the 1930s and 1940s, but to all cinematic practices which strive for a unity of space, time and

narrative and address the spectator as passive observer. That which is referred to by the Oberhausener's as 'Papass Kino' I, therefore, consider to be included within this category.

21. Heath, "Narrative Space", 28.
22. Ibid., 37.
23. Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus", *Film Quarterly*, n. 28 (winter 1974-75), 39-47.
24. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981). Mulvey's essay was first published in *Screen* in 1975.
25. Heath, "Narrative Space", 56-64. My sketch of these arguments is deliberately cursory, for it is beyond the scope of this book to mount a detailed historical critique of the various paradigms of film theory. I mention them in order to signal my departure from such kinds of film analysis, while also acknowledging that elements of these theories contain lines of flight that not only feed into each other but signal directions yet to be taken up in film studies.
26. Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde", Elsaesser ed., *Early Cinema*, op.cit.
27. It is important to point out that Gunning does not employ the term genre simply as a matter of content alone, but as a complex interrelation of all the stylistic and technical devices of film by which that content is put together.
28. Tom Gunning, "Non-Continuity, Continuity, Discontinuity: A Theory of Genres in Early Films", Elsaesser ed., *Early Cinema*, 86.
29. *Cinema 1*, 25.
30. Heath, "Narrative Space", 39.
31. Thomas Elsaesser, "Early Film Form. Articulations of Space and Time", in Elsaesser ed., *Early Cinema*, 21.
32. Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions", 57.
33. Roland Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein", *Image-Music-Text*, trans., Stephen Heath, (London: Flamingo, 1984), 70.
34. Elsaesser succinctly summarizes the PMR in "Early Film Form", 24.
35. As authors such as Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault have pointed out, the tableau scenes and frontal staging of early cinema cannot simply be reduced to the simple reproduction of the proscenium stage of the legitimate theatre. See Tom Gunning, "'Primitive' Cinema: A Frame-up? Or the Trick's on Us", in *Early Cinema*, Elsaesser ed., and André Gaudreault, "Theatricality, Narrativity, and 'Trickality': Reevaluating the Cinema of Georges Méliès", *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, v. 15, n. 3 (1987).
36. Sebastian Feldmann, "Kommentierte Filmographie", Jansen & Scuria eds., *Werner Schroeter*, 110.
37. *Cinema 2*, 98.
38. Ibid., 99.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., 105.
41. Ibid., 107.
42. I have discussed this notion of depth of field elsewhere in relation to Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978) where layers of sound also contribute to this conception of depth and remembering. See "Film Figures: Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* and Alexander Kluge's *The Female Patriot*" in Laleen Jayamanne ed., *Kiss Me Deadly*, 150-162.
43. Jodi Brooks coins this term in her article "Consumed by Cinematic Monstrosity", *Art & Text* (spring, 1989), 81. I will clarify what is meant by it below.
44. Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein", 71.

45. In Brecht, the notion 'gest' (*Gestus*) refers to the way certain attitudes are conveyed to a spectator (or listener) by a particular gesture, scene, text, or piece of music in epic theatre. The presentation of the gest involves an act of showing the conditions under which the theatrical representation were brought about. I will undertake a much more detailed discussion of gest in regard to gesture in chapter 6.
46. Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein", 70-71.
47. Ibid., 72.
48. Brooks, "Consumed by Cinematic Monstrosity", 81.
49. Ibid., 79-81.
50. Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein", 73.
51. Benjamin compares allegorical writing with hieroglyphics because of the way in allegory "the written word tends toward the visual." *OGTD*, 176.
52. Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein", 73.
53. Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp", *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1986), 279. Sontag herself borrows this term from Empson. The urban pastoral relates to the tendency in camp towards artifice. Even nature must be man-made. "Nothing in nature can be campy...Rural camp is still man-made, and most campy objects are urban." It is through this notion of the urban pastoral that Corrigan acknowledges Schroeter's affiliations with the tradition of camp. While Schroeter certainly has a place in this tradition, which Sontag also describes as the "sensibility of failed seriousness", I would argue that Schroeter's films are never entirely or only camp.
54. Corrigan, "Schroeter's Willow Springs", 178-179.
55. *Cinema 2*, 195.
56. The notion of the conceptual frame is Erving Goffman's. James Naremore applies it to the street performer in *Acting in the Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 14.
57. Brooks, "Consumed by Cinematic Monstrosity", 81.
58. I should note here that not all of Schroeter's tableau images result in a social gest, but produce other kinds of gests. I will turn to this is a point in chapter 6.
59. Gunning, "Non-continuity, Continuity, Discontinuity," 91.
60. *Cinema 2*, 3.
61. *Cinema 1*, 75.
62. In Germany, Nicola will kill two German men after being used by a girl to make her boyfriend jealous. During the trial, many images and sounds (including the woman's sad song) return as emblematic inserts into the confused space of the courtroom.

Chapter Four

Allegorical Montage

In the last chapter, I explored the various ways Schroeter treats space as tableau; from its rather more 'primitive' articulations in the static shot, to a much more complex and conceptual notion of the tableau which, thanks to certain kinds of temporal disturbances caused primarily by reframing and performance, enables the image to separate into several layers of temporality. It is thus through the tableau in this more conceptual sense that the allegorical image may be identified. Schroeter's use of space differs considerably from the ways so-called narrative space is articulated in classical narrative cinema, and similarly in his films montage also assumes a very different function. Classical narrative space hinges upon the ability for editing to assume an invisible function in the process of fragmenting and reassembling elements of profilmic material into an apparently seamless and continuous whole. The 'tableauisation' of space, in contrast, prevents the presentation of such a homogeneous spatio-temporal continuum, but rather involves the opening up of independent spatio-temporal periods or sections, moments which themselves become the locus of diverse temporalities: past, present, future, memory, history, hope. In Schroeter's films each image, sequence and episode may function as a tableau, as an allegorical image torn from the context of any specific locality or temporality. It is to the manner in which these tableaux are collected together that the present chapter will now turn.

Although, as I have shown Schroeter sometimes employs classical editing devices within individual tableaux, the form of montage that joins these tableaux together proceeds by a different logic entirely. Rather than using the so-called 'invisible' or 'rational' cut of classical narrative cinema, Schroeter's cinema employs a kind of 'irrational cut,' a cut which makes obvious the interval or gap between successive images. The form of montage that Schroeter employs works to emphasize rather than conceal those fragmenting, allegorizing aspects of film that Walter Benjamin had placed so much importance on in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction".¹ I wish to call this form of montage allegorical, which can be differentiated from a range of other practices of editing and montage, including

Sergi Eisenstein's notion of dialectical montage, which also makes use of fragments. But whereas in dialectical montage it is the final combination of these elements that is important, in the allegorical form it is the interval between fragments that is most significant. In movement-image cinema, to which Eisenstein's practice belongs, montage proceeds according to what Deleuze calls the "rational cut." This cut is concerned with the smooth or seamless connection or linkage of images. In the cinema of the time-image, which proceeds by way of "irrational cuts," the emphasis is placed on the cut itself, on the incommensurable division between images. Montage, therefore, plays an important role in the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema of the movement-image and the bringing into being of pure time-images. Not only can the allegorical montage that we find in Schroeter's cinema be aligned with this new form of montage, but it forms a very specific kind of montage within the cinema of the time-image.

Rational cuts: Organic and Dialectical Linkages

In his first book on the cinema, Deleuze identified what he calls the four trends of montage in the cinema of the movement-image. These are the "organic trend" of the American school, the "dialectical trend" of the Soviet school, the "quantitative trend" of the pre-war French school, and the "intensive trend" of the German Expressionist school.² Although all have distinctive features which set them apart from one another, what draws them all together is the fact that montage in each of these schools is achieved according to the logic of the "rational cut", a defining characteristic of the cinema of the movement-image. I will focus here on only two of these four forms of montage: the organic trend and the dialectical trend. The first because of its domination over forms of narrativity in the cinema, and the second because, like allegory, the fragment forms its basic unit of composition. Although most conventional film theory places these two forms of montage in direct opposition to one another, Deleuze finds in them a common emphasis on the linkage of images.

According to Deleuze, in the older forms of montage it is the supreme task of montage to create associations or relations between images. As Deleuze writes: "The so-called classical cinema works above all through linkage of images, and subordinates cuts to this linkage."³ It is through such an emphasis on the *linkage* of images which allows him to bring together the "organic trend" of the American school, epitomized by D. W. Griffith, with what is often thought of as the opposite and incommensurable practice of Soviet montage represented above all by Sergei Eisenstein and his conceptions of "dialectical" and "intellectual" montage.

What Deleuze calls the "organic trend" of the American school begins with Griffith, and, subsequently, comes to inform the mode of editing proper to classical narrative cinema. Organic montage works by way of the two complementary systems of parallel alternation and convergence, whose main function is to overcome conflict and restore unity. Organic montage effects smooth transitions between images. In such cases, montage converges with the narrative intention of the film; "narrativity flows from this conception of montage."⁴ Montage serves to erase the fragmenting

action editing has upon the film, enabling narrative to flow in a smooth, uninterrupted fashion.

In contrast, the “dialectical montage” theorized and practiced by Eisenstein does not attempt to efface the fragmenting process of montage in the same way. In fact, dialectical montage takes the fragment as its most fundamental element. This emphasis on the fragment and the fragmenting process of montage might appear to bring us one step closer to a notion of allegorical montage. Deleuze writes that, in dialectical montage, “*montage of opposition* takes the place of parallel montage.”⁵ Eisenstein’s conception of montage, which is itself divided into a series of more specific kinds of montage including ‘dialectical montage’, ‘montage of attractions’, ‘harmonic montage’, and ‘intellectual montage’ takes the fragment or ‘cell’ as its basic unit of composition, and brings these cells into dialectical conflict. Conceived in this way as a dialectical operation, Eisenstein believed that through montage, through the bringing of opposites into conflict, a new unity could be achieved. Conflict is achieved by the placing of “two fragments side by side”.⁶ Thus the fragment, for Eisenstein, does not exist in and for itself, but rather exists only in a system of relations. As Jacques Aumont has written, “it could almost be said that the fragment does not exist outside of this system of its relations to the other fragments.”⁷ Furthermore, Eisenstein’s use of the term ‘cell’ suggests an organic element, which also reflected the way he believed spectators would respond to a series of stimuli. As Aumont points out, in addition to the ideological implications of this theory, Eisenstein conceived of montage in terms of the theory of ‘reflexology’. Aumont writes: “‘reflexology,’ that theory which believed it possible to account for all the activity of the human brain (thought and also ‘feelings’) in terms of reflexes, by the repeated use of the diagram action → reaction.”⁸ This is the very diagram Deleuze uses to characterize the sensory-motor schema of the movement-image, and according to Deleuze, despite the emphasis on the fragment, like the ‘organic’ montage of the American school, Eisensteinian montage works through metaphorical relations and the setting in motion of chains of associations with a predetermined goal in mind. In fact, according to Aumont, Eisenstein’s process of montage seems to aim at the same degree of unity achieved by the American school (although this would certainly be a very different kind of unity). Aumont writes that

organicism appears to be something that miraculously sews up the rents in the fabric of the work created by fragmentation, suturing together the film fragments, those bits and pieces ‘ripped from the highly colored body of nature’ – and it is therefore what protects against the breaking up of that ‘body,’ what insures its unity.⁹

What I wish to call “allegorical montage” is also concerned with “those bits and pieces ‘ripped from the highly coloured body of nature’”, however, it does not offer any protection against the breaking up of that body, unity can no longer be assured. As I have already demonstrated through my discussion of *Deux* in chapter two, Schroeter’s disconnected image fragments never finally achieve such organic unity. Instead, images, characters, ideas often appear to exist in distinct temporal circuits that neither alternate in parallel fashion, nor as a montage of oppositions that can coincide or synthesize into a single, final idea.

Irrational Cuts: Intervals and Relinkages

It is possible to discern most clearly the distinction between dialectical and allegorical montage by recalling one of Benjamin's most vivid descriptions of allegory and comparing it with a passage from Eisenstein's own writings. In "Central Park" Benjamin wrote:

That which is touched by the allegorical intention is torn from the context of life's interconnections: it is simultaneously shattered and conserved. Allegory attaches itself to the rubble.¹⁰

A comparable passage from Eisenstein's "On the Problem of a Materialist Approach to Form", which begins with the words "Tearing fragments loose from the surrounding milieu", would appear to involve the same process as allegory, but reading further we discover that Eisenstein's intention is vastly different. The entire passage reads:

Tearing fragments loose from the surrounding milieu according to a conscious and deliberate calculation, predetermined for the purpose of conquering the spectator, after having unleashed these fragments upon him in an appropriate confrontation, while associating him in the appropriate way with the proposed final ideal motif.¹¹

Allegory, according to Benjamin's theory, can never attain to such a "final ideal motif", for once the process of fragmentation has begun, decay ensures that the whole can never be reinstated. Fragments are conserved in and for themselves with the incommensurable gaps between them growing ever wider. In allegorical montage, therefore, the fragment becomes detached from its secure relation to other fragments or images. One does not lead to another by means of a predetermined chain of associations, and, as a consequence, the gap acquires greater significance.

This is precisely the way Deleuze writes of the reversal in the function of montage that takes place with the arrival of the modern cinema: "the image is unlinked and the cut begins to have an importance in itself."¹² Allegorical montage should be thought of as a specific type of this new conception of montage which comes about as a result of the breakdown in the cinema's sensory-motor schema signalling the crisis in the movement-image. Alexander Kluge is one allegorical film-maker who has developed his own theory and practice of montage in which the cut, or rather the interval produced by it, is of primary importance.

Alexander Kluge's Theory of Montage: The Importance of the Interval

Alexander Kluge has sought to theorize and put into practice a new conception of montage. Kluge aspires consciously in his various roles as film-maker, theorist and activist to develop new modes of constructing films that will in turn provide the spectator with new and more active ways of engaging with such films; ways of activating the spectator's own capacity for phantasy, their own ability to make connections.

Kluge's theory of montage hinges on his conception of the 'cut'. As Stuart Liebman has written, this theory "pivots around the break in the flow of images, the cut between shots, or the cut to a title."¹³ This emphasis on the cut opens up a space for the spectator to enact her or his own imagination, or what Kluge calls *Phantasy*. Kluge's films are constructed from an array of diverse fragments such as photographs, archival film footage, illustrations from fairy tales and children's books as well as paintings, drawings, intertitles and fictional episodes. Rather than putting these fragments together with a final "ideal meaning" in mind, Kluge places the emphasis on the role of the spectator in the production of meaning. The looser the logical connection or wider the gap between consecutive images, the more space is left for the spectator to activate her or his own *Phantasy*. Kluge is, therefore, not interested in "conquering the spectator" or "associating him in the appropriate way", as was the case with Eisenstein's dialectical approach, but his theory of montage is interested in involving the spectator in the production of meaning, effectively making them "co-producers" of the film.¹⁴ As such he relies on the spectator's own capacity to make connections between the diverse fragments. This is what Kluge calls the "film in the mind of the spectator", a capacity which he believes has existed for thousands of years, long before the technological invention of cinema. Kluge writes, "film takes recourse to the spontaneous workings of the imaginative faculty which has existed for tens of thousands of years."¹⁵ This capacity to make connections is an ability to edit together images and experiences into something meaningful. To see the hidden correspondences between diverse things is a capacity not unlike Benjamin's notion of 'involuntary memory'. Montage, for Kluge, which is certainly not equivalent to the editing of the film strip, occurs between the film and the spectator and within the spectator's own mind.

Kluge's theory of montage allows the spectator to engage in an act of reading, which requires, as Deleuze has said, of "false continuity", "a considerable effort of memory and imagination."¹⁶ Rather than 'effort' as such, Kluge advocates the adoption of a rather relaxed attitude on the part of the spectator. He has written: "Relaxation means that I myself become alive for a moment, allowing my senses to run wild: for once not to be on guard with the police-like intention of letting nothing escape me."¹⁷ The fragments of Kluge's films, which are images that have ceased to be "linked together 'naturally'", are much like what Deleuze describes as "archaeological, or stratigraphic" images, disconnected or unlinked fragments that enable relinkages to be made "in an infinite number of ways."¹⁸ Although it would be simplistic to say that Schroeter's films are like Kluge's, his tableau images do work in a similarly stratigraphic way.

Kluge's mode of montage is allegorical, not because each stratigraphic image is emptied of meaning, but because the process of emptying out characteristic of allegory occurs in the space *between* the images, in the gap or interval created by the cut. It is the task of the spectator, who must adopt an allegorical way of seeing, to fill these gaps with meaning. Schroeter's cinema also requires a degree of participation on the part of the spectator in order to bridge the gaps between tableaux, but the allegorical intention that comes to greet the spectator differs

considerably from that which we find in Kluge. This has to do, I believe, with the respective parts played by each of these film-makers, on a very practical level, in the development of the New German Cinema.

Kluge's films are very much an expression of many of the tenets addressed in the Oberhausen manifesto, as well as of Kluge's own writings, particularly regarding the role film should play in the public sphere of the Federal Republic. Kluge was particularly concerned with the fact that the new cinema that they hoped to create would be completely ineffectual unless there was a public ready to receive its products. To a certain extent, Kluge's films can be seen as an attempt to educate the audience in ways of seeing, appropriate not only to Kluge's own films, but to those of his colleagues as well. Many of Kluge's films show the allegorical system at work in them, sometimes by the use of a voice-over narrator, or by the confused or disoriented characters that often inhabit his films, and in whom we, the confused and disoriented spectators, can see ourselves.¹⁹ Kluge encourages the spectator not to worry about piecing everything together. As he says, "If I have understood everything then something has been emptied out."²⁰ This is good advice to bear in mind when watching Schroeter's films, but rather than leading us through like Kluge, Schroeter rather encourages us to feel our way through his films. He 'touches' us with his allegorical intention so that we become somewhat dislocated subjects, attuned to the "allegorical ways of seeing" that his films require.

Allegorical Montage

Like Kluge's theory of montage, which places the emphasis on the cut, the mode of montage that emerges in the cinema of the time-image, according to Deleuze, is that of the "irrational cut". It is this cut, rather than the "rational cut" of the movement-image, which "determines the non-commensurable relations between images" in the modern cinema.²¹ Deleuze continues:

Ultimately there are no longer any rational cuts, but only irrational ones. There is thus no longer association through metaphor or metonymy, but relinkage on the literal image; there is no longer linkage of associated images, but only relinkages of independent images. Instead of one image after the other, there is one image *plus* another, and each shot is deframed in relation to the framing of the following shot.²²

All of these aspects of the new montage are valid for Schroeter's cinema. They lay the groundwork upon which we must build in order to say what is specifically allegorical about Schroeter's form of montage. Particularly important is the idea that in this form of montage, based on the irrational cut, images do not follow each other in succession, but rather accumulate, piling one upon the other. Benjamin had identified a similar tendency in baroque allegory in which he has said it was customary "to pile up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal."²³

The accumulation of independent fragments with no apparent goal in mind is a feature of all of Schroeter's films, but is particularly evident in films like *Eika Katappa*,

Flocons d'or, *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* and *Deux* as well as all of his 'collage films'.

²⁴ The collage films, which include *La répétition générale*, *Der lachende Stern*, *De l'Argentine* (1983-5), *Poussières d'amour* and *Die Königin* do not seem to proceed by any systematic logic, but rather, are constructed from a series of autonomous images. Sound, too, sometimes takes on a level of autonomy in these films by being post-dubbed and noticeably unsynchronized. Often a piece of music first associated with a particular image will be recycled over another image or series of images, a strategy Schroeter also frequently uses in his fiction films. The 'collage' films consist of a diverse array of image and sound fragments, not unlike the form of 'literary montage' Benjamin used in his *Passagenwerk*,²⁵ or on a smaller scale in "Central Park". Leo Charney has appropriately described Benjamin's *Passagenwerk* as a "panoply of voices and disjunction of ideas", which reflected with great acumen Benjamin's characterization of experience in modernity full of "anarchic juxtapositions, random encounters, multiple sensations and uncontrollable meanings."²⁶ This is indeed the way one experiences Schroeter's 'collage' films, and to some extent many of his fictional works.

Unlike documentary film, the 'collage' films do not strive to convey information nor do they have a neat narrative logic imposed upon the profilmic material with which to guide the spectator through. They are 'documents' because they present images of the world in which we live as full of anarchic, random and contradictory experiences uncontained by certainty of meaning. But Schroeter's films, with their use of allegorical montage, do not simply seek to reproduce this rather alienated form of experience, but work to open up a space in which the spectator may activate their own imaginative facilities; their capacity for involuntary memory or their ability to evoke the past by diving into a sheet of past. This is a space that is inevitably inside the viewer her/himself. Like the 'cinema of attractions' the address of Schroeter's films is one of 'monstration' rather than narration, showing rather than telling.²⁷

Films such as *La répétition générale* and *Der lachende Stern* collect together a series of impressions around particular themes and places. In the case of *La répétition générale* it is the 1980 World Theatre Festival in Nancy, France, and the themes of love, violence, death, war and theatre. *Der lachende Stern* is based around Imelda Marcos' inaugural and infamous Manila Film Festival, and the politics, culture, history and folklore of the Philippines. There appears to be no predetermined logic that organizes the images. There are no titles to identify the interviewed subjects, and there is no voice-over narrator to string the fragments together. Each impression, which forms an independent tableau, is not contextualized in relation to any other, and each forms its own spatio-temporal period, its own stratigraphic layer. Allegorical montage, which cannot simply be reduced to a technique of editing, has the effect of opening spaces between these layers and preventing the rents between them from being completely sewn up. We can see this system at work by looking in more detail at examples of allegorical montage in *La répétition générale* and *Der lachende Stern*.

The principle of allegorical montage can perhaps be explained most clearly with reference to a few scenes from *La répétition générale* that involve no editing at all.

These scenes, which are dispersed throughout the film, involve an old tramp, wearing a worn old Cossack hat and with a long grey beard and expressive wrinkled face, who responds to several questions posed by the American performance artist Pat Olesko and by Schroeter's friend Mostéfa Djadjam.²⁸ In each of these scenes the tableau is split down the centre by a window frame. On the left of the screen stands the tramp, and on the right either Olesko or Djadjam. At one point both Djadjam and the tramp stand silently with their ears to the glass listening, waiting for the other to say something. Finally Djadjam turns his face towards the glass and says, "I don't hear anything." "You have to ask a question," replies the tramp. "Yes, it is a question," replies Djadjam. Both lapse into silence once more for a few moments before Djadjam continues:

"Love..."

Tramp: "Yes, love."

Djadjam: "Tell me about love."

Finally, after this awkward exchange of misunderstandings the tramp begins to talk about love.

La répétition générale 1980. © Werner Schroeter



The pane of glass that separates them proves to be something of a hindrance to communication, which effectively prevents the scene from functioning as a normal conversation, as dialogue. The acts of listening, speaking and looking cannot be achieved simultaneously. One cannot look at the other while he is listening. Just as the pane of glass literally presents a barrier through which sound can pass only inadequately, it could similarly read as an allegory of allegorical montage. The glass functions as a gap over which sound (and therefore also meaning) does not travel smoothly, but rather becomes deflected and diverted from its course, resulting in interruptions, misunderstandings and moments of silence.

In another of these tramp scenes, the propensity for meaning to slide off this sheet of glass and to take up an entirely new direction can be seen most clearly. This time it is Pat Olesko who asks the question. She presses her lips close to the glass to speak while the tramp holds his ear to the glass. Olesko asks, "Are you afraid of death?" The tramp replies, "Of theatre?" There is a slight pause and then he continues: "Well, somewhat. I am not a specialist of the question." Perhaps he has not misunderstood the question after all. But then he says, "but I am enjoying theatre, especially small theatre", and continues to talk about theatre. Olesko's question, being misheard by the tramp, becomes distorted as it passes over the gap created by the transparent pane of glass, but Olesko listens intently to the tramp's intelligent answer anyway, the original meaning of her question now of no consequence. This form of montage creates an allegorical slippage from death to theatre: allegorical because the tramp's reply takes off on its own course, discarding death as he goes. Death has become theatre, and death is also the thematic content of many of the theatrical performances we see in *La répétition générale*.

Of course this kind of montage, which occurs within the frame is certainly not the most common way in which Schroeter achieves allegorical montage. The above examples have been chosen not only to demonstrate the kinds of disturbances that may arise out of the gaps that are created between two distinct images, but also to show that allegorical montage need not always depend upon the editing of the film strip. The sequences with the tramp enable us to visualize the process of allegorical montage, which normally remains hidden in the space between the images. They are emblematic of the process of allegorical montage. The sheet of glass that forms a barrier, despite the fact that it is virtually invisible, can be seen as a metaphor for the almost imperceptible gap between images that is created through montage. The shiny, reflective but transparent surface of the sheet of glass helps us to think of the way each image or tableau in Schroeter's films form a separate layer. When two layers come together, part of the meaning held within the initial image is deflected, it slips away, but some of the meaning manages to penetrate and infuse the next layer creating an effect in which meanings (ideas, words, sounds, colours, rhythms, patterns, images, histories, memories etc.) accumulate and precipitate from one image to the next.

This form of montage is therefore cumulative in the sense that Deleuze wrote of modern montage, which is not a case of "one image after another," but rather "one

image *plus* another,” but it is also dispersive, subject to the extra allegorical process of decay. In this sense, allegorical montage bears some similarity to the way, according to Benjamin, a “profusion of emblems is grouped around a figural centre” in the allegories of the seventeenth century. Emblems, writes Benjamin,

seem to be arranged in an arbitrary way: *The confused ‘court’* – the title of a Spanish *Traverspiel* – could be adopted as the model of allegory. This court is subject to the law of ‘dispersal’ and ‘collectedness’. Things are assembled according to their significance; indifference to their existence allowed them to be dispersed again.

29

Schroeter’s films could be said to each have several of these ‘figural centres’. These are constituted either by the various themes that the films explore in the case of his collage films, or in the case of his ‘narrative’ films, by a central figure (or figures) such as Nicola in *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*, or the two characters played by Isabelle Huppert in *Deux* and their mother Anna, who are quite literally dispersed. The dispersal which occurs in Schroeter’s films is not caused by indifference, as is the case in the *Traverspiel*, but rather by the fact that in the gap between images created by allegorical montage various fragments become disengaged from their original meanings and do not find their way across the gap without giving way to new meanings on the other side of the cut. These wayward fragments are there to be grasped by the spectator who, depending upon how the particular fragments form constellations in the spectator’s mind, will imbue these fragments with significance.

Allegorical Ways of Seeing

Timothy Corrigan has pointed out the difficulty of discerning a place for the subject/spectator of Schroeter’s films and has argued that this place is neither that constructed by the classical narrative cinema, nor is it one of the complete displacement of the spectator/subject aimed at by more experimental or structuralist film-makers. Corrigan argues that “Schroeter’s cinema works to make a place for the spectator...outside the confines of history and the historical subject, a place where history is redefined finally by the excesses and possibilities that escape it.”³⁰

As Corrigan suggests, Schroeter’s cinema situates its spectator/subject in a place that exceeds the confines of the symbolic order as it is defined by psychoanalysis. I believe Schroeter situates his spectator in a particularly allegorical place, a place from which the moments of historical, theatrical, narrative and cinematic excess that are woven throughout the films may be momentarily grasped and interpreted. Schroeter effectively invites the spectator to adopt an ‘allegorical way of seeing,’ an attitude that requires the spectator to take part in the process of interpretation, but one which is freed from the confines of individuated subjectivity. He offers the spectator the chance to become another.

To a large extent, the affects and meanings that a spectator will take away from Schroeter’s films depend not only upon their openness to the structure of the material and willingness to make their own connections between diverse elements, but also

to the social, cultural and historical knowledge and experience of the individual. An 'allegorical way of seeing', is a way of seeing that is able to dislodge fragments from specific contexts and to make connections through combinations of diverse images. *Der lachende Stern* is a good film with which to discuss the role of the spectator in relation to the process of allegorical montage because of the way it works with elements of politics, history, folklore and personal memory. It is perhaps Schroeter's most political and socially conscious film to date.³¹

Schroeter made *Der lachende Stern* when he was invited to attend the inaugural Manila International Film Festival in 1983, organized and presided over by Imelda Marcos, the wife of Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos.³² The film is not just about the Festival, however, but digs down into the different strata of Philippine social, political, religious, cultural and personal history with the context of the festival serving only as a point of departure. Schroeter uses the same mode of allegorical montage that he used in *La répétition générale*, editing together a variety of fragments from Imelda Marcos giving speeches about the political structure of her country or singing *Feelings* on stage to the Festival's guests, to fragments of archival news footage and excerpts from Fritz Lang's film *American Guerilla in the Philippines* (1950).

In one particular sequence, scenes of a Christian procession, recreating Christ's journey to Calvary complete with self-flagellators who lie bleeding on the ground, are followed by the image of a star made of matchsticks.³³ These disconnected images are followed by a woman telling the creation story of the island's indigenous people; the landing of an official U.S. helicopter; and an image of rice terraces. Then Imelda Marcos speaks about love being more powerful than the nuclear bomb. The last image we see before the film cuts to an intertitle is archival footage of military planes flying in formation, which is accompanied on the soundtrack by Elvis Presley singing *Padre*. At no time does Schroeter give us a context through which to situate these images in time or space. This short montage of images is typical of the way the film proceeds in discordant fragments. Scattered throughout the film are allusions to the history of the Philippines from the sixteenth century, when the country was invaded by the Spanish, through to 1898, when, according to the Paris peace treaty, the Philippines passed into American hands, and then to the establishment of the first Philippine Republic in 1899. In addition, there are references to much more recent historical events, including the assassination of the exiled Philippine opposition leader Benigno Aquino in August 1983. Much of this history is presented in fragments of archival news footage and by locals telling their own oral histories. A series of intertitles punctuate the film, displaying dates relating to particular historical events, but these appear in non-chronological order. References are also made to other Third World countries such as El Salvador and Chile, and the whole film is infused with various icons of American culture, such as Coca-Cola, Elvis Presley, and Ronald Regan as both movie star and president. We meet some Filipinos who appeared in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979). They act out for the camera one of the scenes in which they appeared, marking out their performances with imaginary guns. One of them tells us how, for his part in the film, he was shown how to operate an M16 rifle, and adds that "the food was good!" This montage of

ideas is typical of the film in general, out of which an ironic but never overtly critical attitude arises. Schroeter leaves the spectator to form their own opinion of these scattered pieces of history.

The film does not attempt to structure our thought, but allows us to take what fragments we can from its images and to make connections with our own knowledge and history. Each layer accumulates by being added to the last. New meanings are added and other meanings become more dispersed. The spectator, who has adopted an allegorical way of seeing, is able to catch hold of those random fragments and make of them something meaningful.

The refrain of the young man creating the matchstick star, which is repeated more than half a dozen times throughout the film, forms something of an allegorical emblem of the process of allegorical montage used in the film. It demonstrates a particular characteristic of allegory in which "any person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else."³⁴ A few humble matchsticks can be turned into a beautiful star, an emblem that can have virtually limitless meanings. The matchstick star, made from discrete elements, is itself a product of montage. Like allegorical montage, it opens a space, and it is this space that is important, for it allows the spectator to activate her or his own imagination. As Schroeter has said: "My film is a challenge to the imagination. On the one hand it should work to collapse distances, but on the other it should also like to widen them."³⁵ As the star opens under the gentle force of a few droplets of water, the spectator is also encouraged to open her or himself to the film; to its images, its sounds, its histories and its memories. The matchstick star is clearly the 'laughing' or 'smiling' star of the film's title, and it is intended to literally make the spectator smile. It is a 'trick' designed to encourage us to open up mimetically to the film and engender in us a kind of haptic fascination. Each time the refrain is repeated the star is created in ever differing degrees of perfection and imperfection. Towards the end of the film, the 'trick' is inserted at ever-closer intervals until, in the very final image of the film, it is created once more, but this time almost to perfection. That this state of near perfection is achieved only through a process of trial and error is important, because it points to the fact that history cannot be known as a complete and perfect document, and that the past must be recognized in the present in ever different constellations. For, as Benjamin says, "every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably."³⁶ This is a particularly allegorical impulse that acknowledges the passing of time, but nevertheless attempts to stem the flow.

Although not taken up explicitly in the film, Schroeter's experience at the Manila International Film Festival served as the catalyst for some historical montage of his own. In his own writings about the film, published in the German magazine *Tip*, Schroeter writes of how many aspects of the Film Festival reminded him of images he has seen of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Schroeter writes: "Child choruses, rejoicing choirs, soldiers, cathedrals of light, folklore, champagne: power and culture mixed with the best of their might."³⁷ In his article, Schroeter is not only

mindful of the contradictions between the opulence of the festival and the poverty in which many Filipinos live, but also of the complicity of the invited international guests from the cultural and political centres of the world – France, Germany, Italy, England, Russia – who help to raise the status of the Festival and tacitly accept the Marcos' totalitarian regime. Schroeter wonders whether the official delegates from these democratic nations have learnt anything from history. He asks rhetorically: "Why do I hate the followers more than the perpetrators?"³⁸ Schroeter's use of allegorical montage enables many layers of history to be made present, for history to be made recognizable in the present situation without literally spelling everything out which would ultimately be reductive and close the film off to other 'presents'. The ability for this particular film to cross into different presents is evidenced by ZDF's decision in May 1986 to alter its programme schedule and re-screen *Der lachende Stern* in the face of the political situation in the Philippines coming to a head by the eventual overthrow of the Marcos regime. As the reviewer of the *Frankfurter Rundschau* writes: "This film is less a piece of journalism, and far more an artistic documentation, which perhaps may help to make the roots of the current crisis clear in a somewhat different way."³⁹

Erinnerungsbilder: Repetition of Difference⁴⁰

In *Der Lachende Stern*, Schroeter makes us acutely aware of history's repetitive rhythms, but repetition is yet another characteristic of Schroeter's mode of allegorical montage. Like the new montage of the modern cinema that Deleuze says is characterized by the irrational cut, the delinkage and relinkage of independent images rather than the linkage of associated images, and the accumulation rather than succession of images, Schroeter's cinema employs a form of repetition that is equally characteristic of the cinema of the time-image. As Deleuze writes of Alain Resnais' *Je t'aime je t'aime*, in Schroeter's cinema repetition involves a "return to the same image, but caught up in a new series."⁴¹ I will discuss this notion of repetition being "caught up in a new series" shortly, but first I wish to call upon an argument put forth by Timothy Corrigan regarding Schroeter's use of repetition: an argument that I ultimately wish to build upon.

According to Corrigan, repetition in the cinema can engender two very different modes of temporality. Drawing his definitions of these models from psychoanalysis, Corrigan points out that according to Freud, repetition is involved in the stabilization of the "subject-ego as it binds that subject to the cohesive narrative of memory's recollection."⁴² It is a key element in the classical narrative cinema and helps to bind the spectator into the spatio-temporal movement of the film. Corrigan writes: "the repetition of shots, figures, and images places the spectator solidly in a narrative pattern based on recognition."⁴³ Narrative, memory and repetition, according to this model, are inextricably linked. Indeed, as Stephen Heath has asserted, "without narrative, the memory of a film fails."⁴⁴ Repetition helps to ground the narrative for the spectator so that recognition can occur.⁴⁵

Corrigan argues that Schroeter uses the second model of repetition precisely to counter the modes of recognition and destabilize the subject set up by the first model.

Schroeter's films are marked by "the dispersal of unity and the disbanding of historical identity."⁴⁶ According to Lacan, this kind of repetition brings about a kind of diversity "constituted by repetition itself."⁴⁷ Corrigan then cites Heath:

From this perspective, repetition functions as 'an absence of direction, a failure of coherence: the return to the same in order to abolish the difficult time of desire, it produces in that very moment the resurgence of inescapable difference [...]. Its edge, its final horizon is thus death, the ultimate collapse of same and different, pure totality and indifference.'⁴⁸

Corrigan reads Schroeter's use of this second kind of repetition on two levels. Thematically, it relates to the retreat of characters into what Corrigan calls the "pastoral instant", a kind of "temporal seclusion" similar to the opening of spatio-temporal periods enabled by the tableau and reminiscent of the "explanatory interludes" identified by Benjamin as integral to the allegorical dramas of the seventeenth century. Corrigan locates this strategy of repetition particularly in films such as *Willow Springs* (1972/3) and *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* and he argues that the appearance of actresses such as Christine Kaufmann, Ila von Hasperg and Magdalena Montezuma in film after film further contribute to this "continual return to the same or similar image."⁴⁹ Indeed, as I demonstrated in chapter two, *Deux* takes part in this return to similar images almost obsessively through a process of endless multiplications and temporal forkings through Isabelle Huppert's 'Maria' and 'Magdalena'. She invites the spectator to recall almost all of Schroeter's major female figures to date. On a stylistic level, according to Corrigan, such repetition "invariably threatens to undermine narrative suspense with a kind of boredom, indifference." Corrigan continues: "This repetition of images becomes in this way a kind of stasis, a nonnarrative moment that actually stops the fetishized disguise of film's movement in an instant of death at work."⁵⁰ Corrigan concludes that Schroeter plays both of these kinds of image-repetition against one another, which ultimately means that Schroeter's films create a tension between two different modes of cinematic temporality. According to my understanding of Corrigan's argument, therefore, the stasis brought about by the second model of repetition works to halt the flow of narrative time (in the classical narrative sense), while apparatus time, which narrative time seeks to mimic, draws the moment of stasis into the incessant flow of images through the projector.

With the insight into the conceptual sphere of cinematic images and their temporalities offered by the work of Gilles Deleuze, I wish to add another level to Corrigan's argument. I have already shown that through the 'tableauisation' of space, Schroeter is able to create spatio-temporal instants in which disturbances cause the image to separate into various temporal layers. Time, history, memory and narrative collect in these images, separating into various layers both within and between them. In so far as every 'image' of Schroeter's films forms a tableau, either literally or conceptually,⁵¹ I do not believe that the stasis brought about by the tableau and its repetition merely functions to place a hold on narrative and symbolically resist apparatus time and historical time.

The key to Schroeter's strategy of repetition does lie, as Corrigan suggests, in difference, in the fact that in the majority of cases where image-repetition occurs it is not a matter of repetition of the same image but of similar images. This is where Deleuze's comment about repetition not being a return to the same image, but that images get caught up in a new series, is important. Repetition in Schroeter's films works like this. The 'tableauisation' of space separates images and episodes into autonomous sheets with nothing but thematic or aesthetic relationships between them. Repetition causes these sheets to overlap, each repetition forming a new instance of the same element but deriving from a different sheet of past or peak of present. Like the creation of the matchstick star, which must begin again each time from the beginning, each repetition takes its point of departure from a point in time not contiguous with that of the similar image that preceded it. These points cannot be strung together to form a continuous thread, but rather seem to occupy scattered points on different strata of the film's own memory which in turn presents the spectator with an invitation to recollect. They are therefore not "indifferent" images, but forgetful ones, involved in a different form of remembering. They are much closer to the notion of 'involuntary memory', which Benjamin adopts from Proust. Of involuntary memory Benjamin writes:

not only do its images not come when we try to call them up; rather, they are images which we have never seen before we remember them.⁵²

The repetitions in Schroeter's films function as forgetful *Erinnerungsbilder*, as moments of the film's own involuntary memory.

In German, *Erinnerung* is indeed the form of memory appropriate to involuntary recollection, for as Benjamin points out by citing Reik's theory of memory: "The function of remembrance [*Gedächtnis*]...is the protection of impressions; memory [*Erinnerung*] aims at their disintegration. Remembrance is essentially conservative, memory is destructive."⁵³ *Erinnerung* would then be the form of memory appropriate to the allegorical mode.

Nowhere is this more well expressed than in the final section of *Eika Katappa*, where the film collects together the shards of its own scattered imagery. This section functions as a review of all the other parts: A man is shot again and again in a staccato of images; Carla Aulaulu dies again and again on a lonely country road; Kriemhild mourns her beloved Siegfried once more and remembers the good times they spent together; a young man drags the corpse of his lover up a hillside. Pieces of music, too, that we have heard before are now combined in new image-sound combinations. As Schroeter himself says: "All stories have to end in the melting pot. A lot of music helps to mix them up."⁵⁴ The images remind us of those we have seen before, but they are all slightly different. They are literally different takes of the same scene. No fragment is spared, not even those fragments bearing the rust-coloured scars at the end of the film reel. Through repetition, the film engages in its own form of involuntary recollection and invites the spectator to do the same. These are not flashbacks but, as Deleuze might say, invitations to recollect.

Schroeter's particular form of allegorical montage, is therefore based primarily on strategies of fragmentation, semantic and temporal dislocation, as well as on a form of repetition that does not reinforce narrative flow, but splits his film into a series of temporal sheets that do not follow in smooth linear succession from one to another. Collected together in a spectator's mind, these temporal sheets remind us of images we have seen before, yet they have been torn from any context that might provide them with a final or fixed meaning. Instead, we are invited to recollect in a rather haphazard and somewhat involuntary way, yet our own forgetfulness ensures that we will continue to search for the rather ephemeral meanings that Schroeter's films seem to suggest, but never allow to be reduced to any single final idea. Schroeter's strategies of allegorical montage seduce us into a kind of repetitive movement and induce in us a certain compulsion to repeat, like Bulle Ogier's character Anna in *Deux* who reads the same passage over and over. He invites us too to watch his films over and over as though we are seeing them again for the first time. As we shall see in the next chapter, Schroeter's gestural strategies are afflicted by a similar kind of forgetful remembering.

Notes

1. *Illuminations*, trans., Harry Zohn (London: Fontana Press, 1992).
2. *Cinema 1*, 29-55.
3. *Cinema 2*, 213. Although Deleuze uses the term "classical cinema", in the context of this sentence, he can be read to be implying all four of the older forms of montage.
4. *Cinema 1*, 31.
5. *Ibid.*, 34.
6. S. Eisenstein, "Off-Frame," quoted by J. Aumont in *Montage Eisenstein* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 40.
7. J. Aumont, *Montage Eisenstein*, 36.
8. *Ibid.*, 45.
9. *Ibid.*, 65.
10. "Central Park", 38.
11. Eisenstein, "On the Problem of a Materialist Approach to Form", quoted in Aumont, *Montage Eisenstein*, 54.
12. *Cinema 2*, 213.
13. Stuart Liebman, "Why Kluge?" *October*, n. 46 (1988), 14.
14. See Kluge "On Film and the Public Sphere", in particular the section entitled "The Spectator as Entrepreneur", 210-211.
15. *Ibid.*, "Utopian Cinema," 209.
16. *Cinema 2*, 245.
17. Kluge, "On Film and the Public Sphere", 211.
18. *Cinema 2*, 245. Kluge in fact sees history as an archaeological project of collecting fragments, not just great moments of 'official' history, but stories, experiences, memories, the discarded elements of society. His 1979 film *The Female Patriot* (*Die Patriotin*, 1979) explores this idea in detail.
19. A good example of both of these devices can be found in *Die Patriotin* where the voice-over narrator is nothing but a fragment itself, a knee, and the female protagonist, Gabi Teichert, is engaged in the task of gathering the diverse fragments that make up the history of her country. She is often puzzled as to the significance of those fragments.
20. Kluge, "On Film and the Public Sphere," 211.
21. *Cinema 2*, 213.
22. *Ibid.*, 214. In endnote # 38 Deleuze cites Jean-Pierre Bamberger commenting on Godard's *Slow Motion* (*Sauve qui peut*, 1979) to explain this notion of deframing and reframing: "In the framing are the different

moments of shooting; the taking of one shot is the framing, the shooting of another shot is the deframing of one shot in relation to the framing of the following one, and the montage is the final reframing...Framing is no longer defining a space, but imprinting a time."

23. OGTD 178.
24. *La répétition générale* has been described as a "collage of impressions". Thomas Thieringer, "Liebe und Krieg", *Kirche und Rundfunk*, n. 99, (17 December, 1980). See also Klaus Morgenstern, "Chaotisch-irrwitzige Collage. Generalprobe", *Frankfurter Rundschau* (25 November, 1980). Sebastian Feldmann has described *Der lachende Stern* as "A collage of poetry and politics", in "Eine Collage aus Poesie und Politik", *Rheinische Post*, n. 152 (3 July, 1987).
25. The *Passagenwerk*, known in English as *The Arcades Project*, has only recently been published in English in its entirety. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, op.cit.
26. Leo Charney, "In a Moment: Film and the Philosophy of Modernity", in Leo Charney & Vanessa R. Schwartz eds., *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 283.
27. Tom Gunning's metaphor of the "gaping viewer" who is opened up by the cinema of attractions, as opposed to the spectator of later narrative cinema who is immersed in narrative as an absorbed voyeur is particularly evocative. However, rather than being so much opened up to and in the present tense of the spectacle as in early cinema, Schroeter's films open the spectator up to history, memory and experience (*Erfahrung*) in a way much closer to Kluge's notion of the film in the head of the spectator.
28. Schroeter has told me that this tramp had once been a university professor who had decided to live on the streets. Schroeter noticed him during the festival often standing outside the auditorium and decided to make him a part of the film. Conversation with Schroeter, Berlin, (14 April 2005).
29. OGTD, 188.
30. Timothy Corrigan, "Schroeter's Willow Springs and the Excesses of History" in *New German Film: The Displaced Image*, 175.
31. Although I have unfortunately been unable to view *De l'Argentine* (1983-5), reports of this film indicate that it takes up many of the same themes as *Der lachende Stern*.
32. The circumstances of the Festival are particularly scandalous. Tens of thousands of slum dwellers were evicted to make way for the Festival Centre. Due to time constraints, construction continued throughout the day and night, workers forced to sleep in shifts on the construction site. One evening, while many of the workers were sleeping, a concrete floor gave way, crushing the sleeping workers below. As Schroeter notes, the locals call the Centre the 'hall of corpses' because Mrs Marcos would not allow a rescue effort to go ahead fearing that delays would cause the Centre to remain unfinished, as her international guests were due to arrive in a matter of weeks. It is said that hundreds were buried alive under the concrete.
33. This image, which forms a repetitive refrain throughout the film, consists of various attempts by a young man to create a star out of matchsticks. First he lays the matches on a glass table with their heads touching in the centre, and he then applies a few drops of water from a drinking straw causing the matches to spread out from the centre to form an uneven but unmistakably star-like shape. Each time we see him attempt this, the star forms slightly more perfectly until, in the final image of the film, the matches form into the shape of an almost perfect star.
34. OGTD, 175.
35. Werner Schroeter, "Showdown in Manila", *Tip*, n. 14 (1983), 45.
36. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", *Illuminations*, 247.
37. Schroeter, "Showdown in Manila", 45
38. Ibid.
39. Anonymous (FR), "Philippinisches Mosaik. *Der lachende Stern* - Dokumentarfilm von Werner Schroeter", *Frankfurter Rundschau* (25 May, 1986), np.
40. 'Erinnerungsbild' literally means 'recollection', or 'memory' image. Paul B. Kleiser uses the term with specific reference to Schroeter's film *Der Bomberpilot*. He says that certain images that depict the consequence of an event that has not yet taken place (often ones that are caught up in repetitions) function as the film's own form of forememory. Kleiser says that "these images do not function as traditional flashbacks, but rather as ciphers,

as *Erinnerungsbilder*. This form of recollection gives the images their freedom and their beauty." Paul B. Kleiser, "Die Wiederkehr des Verdrängten", *Material zu den Filmen*, (Keller Kino, 1974), 154. This kind of memory is very similar to involuntary memory which, as Benjamin reminds us, "are images which we have never seen before we remember them."

41. *Cinema 2*, 214.
42. Corrigan, "Schroeter's *Willow Springs* and the Excesses of History", 181.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Stephen Heath, "Repetition Time: Notes around 'Structural/Materialist' Film", in *Questions of Cinema*, 171.
45. As an example of this form of image repetition one could think of the use of the wedding ring in the recent film *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan, 1999) which, despite its 'secret' plot twist, is very much a classical film. Our attention is drawn to the ring early in the film so that when it falls onto the floor at the end of the film it can function as a memory image that will help to unlock the film's secret. The fact that a ring is also a souvenir, a container of memory (a point that is made clear during a scene in the antique shop), adds to its weight as a container of the film's own memory.
46. Corrigan, "Schroeter's *Willow Springs*", 181.
47. Corrigan citing Jacques Lacan in *ibid.*
48. Corrigan citing Heath, in *ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. Corrigan, "Schroeter's *Willow Springs*", 181.
51. I am using the term 'image' in its broadest possible sense here to include not only single shots but such edited sequences as I discussed in the first part of the chapter.
52. Benjamin, "A Short Speech on Proust", quoted in Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience", 179.
53. Benjamin citing Reik in "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", *Illuminations*, 157.
54. Schroeter, English synopsis of *Eika Katappa* in Schmid & Scuria, 23.

Chapter Five

A Gestural Cinema: Allegorical Figures and Faulty Performances

When Michèle Morgan leans over to kiss her dying lover for the last time, when Jean Gabin looks back at the ship that is carrying away his sweetheart, and when Louise Brooks looks into the camera as she falls into her lover's arms, these are the so-called high points of the cinema. But when Magdalena Montezuma leans over to kiss a man who lies motionless on the floor, when Steven Adamczewski looks sadly into the camera, or when Carla Aulaulu rises from a couch to throw her arms around a man, they are in no way cinema's high points, but gestures...¹.

With the above words, the German critic Wilfried Wiegand points to an important distinction between the function of performance style in illusionist narrative cinema and gesture as it is used in Schroeter's cinema. This distinction is inherently related to the tendency in Schroeter's films to defer and displace the classical codes of cinematic continuity and narrative. In the above quote, Wiegand describes three actions – a kiss, a look and an embrace – as they are performed firstly by three great stars of pre-classical French and American cinema: Michèle Morgan, Jean Gabin and Louise Brooks, and then the same actions as they are performed by three of Schroeter's regular cast members, most probably in his 1968 film *Neurasia*.²

The first three are named as "high points" of the cinema, while the second three are nothing "but gestures". What makes this second group of gestures so different from the first? What markers are contained in the first three that allows them to be named as "high points of the cinema", while the second may not? Indeed the answers to both of these questions are plain to see in Wiegand's own descriptive language. Without even needing to name the films out of which the first three examples are drawn, a narrative context is implied. The examples chosen by Wiegand are "high points" precisely because they signify a moment of narrative climax: they are the *final* kiss, the *final* look and an embrace that might conclude a sequence of heightened emotional tension. Furthermore, the gestures have narrative motivation; that is, they

are directed toward an identifiable character: “her lover”, “his sweetheart” and “her lover’s arms”. Some kind of relationship is implied between the pairs of characters, they are couples. However, in the examples drawn from Schroeter’s film, there is no narrative contextualization or motivation indicated for each gesture, and they are anonymously directed toward either “a man” or “the camera”. This lack of contextualization is not an oversight on Wiegand’s part, for, as I demonstrated in chapter three, Schroeter’s films certainly do not proceed by a narrative logic based on directed or motivated connections between cause and effect implied by the first three examples, nor are they concerned with creating psychologically complex characters. Schroeter’s films are, rather, abundantly populated with roughly sketched stereotypes who become allegorical figures through the modes of performance and the gestures employed by his actors. But are these gestures, as Wiegand suggests, *just* gestures? I would suggest that they are not, and that there is a great deal more going on within these gestures than can be understood within conventional paradigms of textual film analysis. The present chapter will therefore be dedicated to exploring the great many gestures and gestural modes of performance that inhabit Schroeter’s films and which ultimately contribute to the various allegorical layers of those films. I will show that Schroeter plays with a variety of theatrical and cinematic conventions through the kinds of performance he elicits from his actors. I will situate the qualities of these gestures with reference to more conventional ways of discussing filmic performance and indicate the points at which Schroeter’s gestures exceed the very terms of reference that give rise to them, ultimately calling upon the reader/spectator to modify their ways of reading/viewing and grasping meanings generated by such gestures. I will also indicate the difficulties of fixing upon a final interpretation of those gestures, which in a truly allegorical sense, seem always to refer to something else.

Schroeter’s cinema is very much a gestural cinema. Gestures and the modes of performance used to produce them are often more important to his films than matters such as plot, dialogue or characterization. His use of gesture is intimately linked with his use of the tableau, for, as I have already demonstrated in chapter three, the ‘tableauisation’ of space frequently relies upon the ability for gestures and poses to place a ‘hold’ on action. This hold on action and movement is what ultimately gives rise to allegorical images. As a result, various conflicting temporalities are brought to the surface of these images.

Similarly, in terms of the gestural sphere, Schroeter draws upon a variety of theatrical, operatic and cinematic traditions, but in doing so he disrupts and interferes with the various codes upon which those traditions are built. In his use of gesture, we can see a further instance where Schroeter can be seen to be “playing” with fragments of his cultural heritage.³ This heritage cuts across diverse strata, many of which also correspond to various musical styles such as opera, cabaret, the revue show, popular music and Christian religious imagery. Schroeter draws upon dramatic theatre and opera but also recalls the medieval tradition of the passion play, the extravaganza of the revue, the imperfections of amateur theatre and the repetitive rhythms of the rehearsal. In terms of his cinematic heritage, the gestural modes employed by

Schroeter's performers cover a vast scope, from the histrionics of early cinema to a kind of 'realism' reminiscent of Italian neo-realism, but often they are also tinged with melodrama and an equal sprinkling of camp. There are in fact so many gestures in Schroeter's films that rather than saying they are constructed out of scenes, it would be better to say his films are comprised of gestures. While allegorical montage functions simultaneously as a mode of fragmentary collection and dispersal, the gesture, I shall argue in this chapter, functions similarly as a mode of both linkage and interruption. As a mode of linkage, the gesture is very weak. It is prone to interferences, breakage and dispersal, but it is equally capable of inserting interferences and placing a hold upon action, enabling various temporalities to manifest themselves not only in the image, but in the body itself. Characters or, more precisely, allegorical figures are developed not through dialogue, but rather, as Deleuze says, "gesture by gesture".⁴ Through the multi-layered deployment of these gestures, Schroeter is able, as Deleuze might say, to extract or fragment an (allegorical) "Image" from the clichés of his culture, so that they might look their own commodity value in the face with a destructive, allegorical gaze.⁵

Forgetful Remembering

"Without narrative, the memory of a film fails."⁶

There is a scene in *Eika Katappa* where a young blonde man wearing a white shirt and a blue neckerchief stumbles along a country road. His eyes are half closed, he moves his head upward slightly and to the side. He clutches at his neck with his hands, which slide gradually toward his heart. His body is writhing and convulsing the whole time. He reaches a telegraph pole and stretches his arms out toward it, barely having the strength to prevent himself from collapsing onto the ground. He pushes against the pole with his arms several times, steadies himself and manages to stumble onward down the road a little further. He clutches again and again at his neck and then at his heart. He reaches a second telegraph pole. Falling against it, his arms seem barely able to hold his weight. His legs collapse beneath him. He clutches at his heart and throat once again. He falls to his knees and then finally collapses face down onto the ground. Throughout the scene, which is filmed in a single shot, the hand-held camera observes the young man in medium close-up so that we can see his pained facial expressions. It mimics his writhing, stumbling motions until it, too, comes to rest upon his motionless body that has collapsed onto the road. I willingly suspend my disbelief and presume he is dead. The scene lasts for about two and a half minutes.

The scene described above functions as a self-contained tableau. It is not grounded in a larger narrative context that would provide motivation for the scene. We do not know who the man is, why he is on that road, why he is dying or from what cause (there is no visible wound), but it might be fun to speculate. I take a flying leap into a region of past, into my own cinematic memory.

The scene reminds me of something I have seen before. The young man's gestures are highly codified and histrionically charged. Although I cannot see a wound, the stumbling gait, the way he clutches at his throat and chest with his hands indicate that he is wounded, in pain, and that he is probably dying. Perhaps he is dying of a broken heart, or perhaps Schroeter simply asked this actor to play at dying. I oscillate between abstract and literal readings of his gestures, between becoming emotionally involved in the young man's pain and laughing at the way he over-acts. The young man's gestures could well have been lifted from a Hollywood B-grade gangster film, but his costume doesn't quite seem to fit. He looks more like a character from a 1950s Heimat film, with just a tinge of camp.

I watch the scene again and allow the image and the gestures to penetrate deeper into my memory. I am hoping to find something, a way into the image, a way to describe it and its affects. He is very good looking. He takes so long to die. I watch the scene again. This time I recall the closing scene of Godard's *Breathless* (1960), where Belmondo, who has been shot by the police, stumbles histrionically down a Parisian street, clutching with his hands at the bullet wound on his back, meandering over the road, attempting to steady himself against a car before finally falling face down onto the ground. Indeed, the gestures of the blonde man in *Eika Katappa* do recall those of Belmondo in *Breathless*, despite the many differences between the two scenes. Godard, too, uses a hand-held camera but Belmondo is shot from behind (both by the camera and the gun!) and a series of edits link the unsteady view from behind to Patricia's (Jean Seberg) point of view, who, in her betrayal of him, has inflicted yet another wound from behind: she has stabbed him in the back by telling the police where he is hiding out. Already, without even beginning to retell the story of *Breathless*, it is possible to see that Belmondo's gestures are motivated by the film's narrative, his death is supported by narrative events that lead up to and give rise to it. As such, it could be said that Belmondo's death in *Breathless* constitutes one of cinema's high points, it forms the climactic moment of the narrative, even though *Breathless* can certainly not be called a classical narrative film. But in this scene from *Breathless*, gesture also functions on another level, working simultaneously with and against the film's narrative drive. That Belmondo performs his death in a histrionic manner does not reduce its function in the narrative, but through his exaggerated mode of performance Belmondo allows it to point out beyond this function and signify on another level as well: as quotation. This scene is one of several moments in the film that refer directly to the genre of the Hollywood crime film, quoting in particular the drawn-out death of the generic 'bad guy'. If Belmondo could be accused of overacting his death scene, then it is only to insert the necessary emphasis that any act of quotation implies, but he does not forget to close the quotation marks, doing so by way of yet another quotation of a gesture: he puts his hand to his face and closes his eyes, a gesture we see so often performed in the movies, but not usually by the dead man himself!⁷

From my brief description of Belmondo's performance in the closing scene of *Breathless*, it is possible to see that gesture can function as a signifying element not only of a narrative, but *beyond* a narrative as well. Certain gestures can detach

themselves from narratives and in the process engage in a different kind of remembering than that which, as Heath suggests, the narrative fulfils. But Godard's gesture-memories are often very precise, almost as precise as the many textual quotations he also employs in his films. They are actively engaged in the act of remembering. They are what Proust (and Benjamin) might call 'voluntary memories'. Godard usually makes it possible to locate the source of his quotations, and sometimes he even helps us to do so, sometimes through the use of intertitles, sometimes within the diegesis itself: in *Breathless* we see Belmondo actually looking at an image of Bogart and imitating his gestures. Schroeter in contrast, wants to lead us astray, to send us looking in the wrong sheets of past for forgotten memories, or memories that weren't even there in the first place. Perhaps there was no original, no source, only copies, quotations, quotations of quotations, ever-deteriorating memories of memories, fragments of fragments, forgotten memories. It is above all by way of a kind of mis-quotation or 'involuntary memory' that the scene from *Eika Katappa* described above is able to 'remind' me of the closing scene from *Breathless*. I cannot say exactly why, but that it sprang to mind, that it sparked an involuntary memory. Indeed it is a rather random memory, but it is a memory all the same.

Schroeter uses these kinds of gestural scenes in his films to engage in a form of imprecise quotation, to evoke vague allusions and forgetful remembering. It is above all within the gestures and their repetition (in variation), rather than in the multiple fragmentary or episodic narratives, that the 'memory' of Schroeter's films is located. It is here, too, in the gestural sphere that another important allegorical process takes place. But we should begin by asking what is a gesture?

What is a Gesture?

In most paradigms of film theory and criticism, gesture is usually discussed as an element of acting, style of performance or mode of behaviour. Often gesture is categorized according to classifications of genre and the modes of behaviour proper to those genres: melodrama, film noir, horror, action, slapstick, or screwball to name only a few. Gesture is usually subordinated to character formation and narrative development. Types of gesture are often separated into two general categories of performance style: histrionic and naturalistic (or what Roberta Pearson calls the "verisimilar code").⁸ Histrionics in the cinema involves a highly codified set of gestures, often with precursors in theatre and opera. Gestures are usually large and extended and each gesture of this "limited lexicon" usually expresses a single and definable affect: fear, hate, love, anger etc.⁹ Naturalism, by contrast, aims at producing 'realistic', psychologically motivated characters who behave just as someone would behave in 'real life', and whose gestures cannot be reduced to a single affect. This is the gestural mode most proper to movement-image cinema where gestures are sensory-motor, motivated by and producing actions and reactions to a given set of stimuli.

Such categorizations of performance style and modes of behaviour do not, however, deal with the gesture itself. We should really begin as Roland Barthes has done by

asking the question “what is a gesture?” He does just this in his essay “Cy Twombly: Works on Paper”.¹⁰ Barthes writes that a gesture is:

Something like the surplus of an action. The action is transitive, it seeks only to provoke an object, a result; the gesture is the indeterminate and inexhaustible total of reasons, pulsions, indolences which surround the action with an *atmosphere* (in the astronomical sense of the word). Hence, let us distinguish the *message*, which seeks to produce information, and the *sign*, which seeks to produce an intellection, from the *gesture*, which produces all the rest (the ‘surplus’) without necessarily seeking to produce anything [...]. Thus in gesture is abolished the distinction between cause and effect, motivation and goal, expression and persuasion.¹¹

This abolition of distinctions in Barthes’ notion of gesture is not unlike Deleuze’s notion of the “crystal-image” in which it is no longer possible to distinguish between the true and the false, the actual and virtual.¹² Indeed the distinction is itself of no consequence; it is the friction between the two conflicting terms that matters. But more specifically for Barthes, the gesture shares the same territory outside the realm of representation and communication in which he has elsewhere situated the “grain” of the voice.¹³ This ‘grain’ is important to Schroeter’s films because the voice as well as the body is capable of giving rise to gestures.¹⁴

According to Barthes, the ‘grain’ falls into the area of what Julia Kristeva has called the “genotext”. Borrowing and modifying Kristeva’s terms “genotext” and “phenotext”, Barthes coins the terms “geno-song” and “pheno-song” in order to explain the notion of the “grain of the voice”.¹⁵ According to Kristeva, the “phenotext” is

language which serves to communicate, which linguistics describes in terms of ‘competence’ and ‘performance’...The phenotext is a structure...it obeys rules of communication and presupposes a subject of enunciation and an addressee. The genotext, on the other hand, is a process; it moves through zones that have relative and transitory borders and constitutes a *path* that is not restricted to the two poles of univocal information between two fully fledged subjects.¹⁶

The genotext, it could be said, occupies that indeterminate space between images created by allegorical montage. Rather than moving directly between images, messages go astray, some never finding their way to the other side. Space is left for fragments to play upon one another. The genotext would be capable of crossing between different temporal regions. Echoing Kristeva, Barthes writes that the geno-song “forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation, expression; it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language – not at what it says, but at the voluptuousness of its sounds-signifiers.”¹⁷ The gesture, then, in Schroeter’s cinema, is this kind of genotext which gives us access to allegorical time, its peaks of present and sheets of past in all their simultaneous voluptuousness and decrepitude. But Barthes does not limit his use of the term ‘grain’ to the voice, for it is very much a part of the body

and its gestures: "The 'grain' is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs."¹⁸ It is not simply the voice or the hand or the limb, but it is equally not the song, the word or the performance; it is the gesture in between.

The fact that gesture is something in between, something which does not seek to communicate, but rather forms that which is excessive to communication, irreducible to a particular message, makes it very difficult to locate and therefore to write about. Furthermore, this difficulty is compounded by the fact that, according to Giorgio Agamben, "by the end of the nineteenth century the gestures of the Western bourgeoisie were irretrievably lost."¹⁹

In his article "Notes on Gesture," Agamben discusses the work of Gilles de la Tourette. In the mid 1880s Tourette devised a method for measuring human movements. Using this method in a clinical context, Tourette was able to identify in certain patients a "staggering proliferation of tics, involuntary spasms and mannerisms", the manifestation of a condition which later became known as Tourette's Syndrome, a condition which manifests, writes Agamben, as a "generalized catastrophe of the gestural sphere." In this condition, continues Agamben:

the patient is incapable of either beginning or fully enacting the most simple gestures; if he or she manages to initiate a movement, it is interrupted and sent awry by uncontrollable jerkings and shudderings whereby the muscles seem to dance (chorea) quite independently of any motor purpose.²⁰

Remarkably, however, although thousands of cases of this disorder had been identified between 1885 and the end of the nineteenth century, the condition seems to have disappeared completely in the twentieth century; until in 1971, Oliver Sacks thought he saw three cases in the streets of New York "within the space of a few minutes."²¹ Agamben hypothesises on the apparent disappearance of the disorder with reference to the early cinema of Marey and Lumière, explaining that "ataxy, tics and dystonia" had apparently "become the norm." This, according to Agamben, is the impression given by the histrionics of early film performance, which manifest this apparent crisis of gesture.²²

Furthermore, Agamben argues that the cinema can be seen as a mechanism that has attempted to record and rescue those lost gestures. He writes: "In the cinema, a society that has lost its gestures seeks to reappropriate what it has lost while simultaneously recording that loss."²³ Perhaps the predominance of histrionics that Roberta Pearson locates in the early cinema prior to 1907 and 1908 functions, as Agamben suggests, as a recording of this gestural crisis.²⁴ The transition toward greater 'naturalism' in performance between 1908 and 1913 could then be seen as an attempt to tame those wayward gestures, a regain of control that would correspond with the highly sensory-motor cinema of the movement-image. The crisis of the movement-image and breakdown of the sensory-motor schema that characterizes the cinema of the time-image, could therefore be seen as a loss of the

battle against the decay of the gestural sphere. This crisis of gesture may also be aligned with the destructive aspects of allegory as they manifest themselves in the predominant allegorical figures or stereotypes in Schroeter's films: the Diva, the Singer, the Revue Showgirl, the Prostitute, the Martyr and the Hysteric who together form a kind of repetitive cycle of difference and decay in Schroeter's work and through whom he manages to extract an image from the cliché.

Allegorical Figures: Gestural Characterizations

It is in the gestural characterizations of his allegorical figures where another link can be made between Schroeter's films and early cinema. Just as Agamben suggests that early cinema recorded western society's loss of its gestures, so, too, Schroeter records the breakdown of sensory-motor coordination as a similar deterioration of the gestural sphere.

Throughout his films, Schroeter does not present characters as whole, psychologically motivated people. Like the allegorical figures of the *Traverspiel*, the figures that populate his films are not meant to be understood 'in depth', but rather are types or stereotypes who take on an allegorical function and break down the illusory unity of their own typage.²⁵ They are constituted not so much by what they say, but by how they look, by the way they move, by the gestures they perform and through a frequent inability to perform gestures thoroughly and to completion. Speech rarely takes the form of dialogue which would normally provide some insight into the internal life of a character, but often appears as a kind of "commentary on the images, spoken by the images themselves", like an inscription at the foot of an emblematic engraving.²⁶ Schroeter invariably separates the image and soundtracks, de-synchronizing voice and body, song and singer, and his frequent use of post-dubbing further causes life to flow out of his many allegorical figures. These figures, as I have already demonstrated in chapter two with the example of *Deux*, seem to reach out from film to film to touch one another, performing the allegorical gesture that will cause each subsequent figure to become an allegory. These figures, who are predominantly female, include the Diva, the Singer, the Revue Showgirl, the Prostitute, the Martyr and the Hysteric.²⁷ To these female figures could be added the Sad Young Man, the predominant masculine figure in Schroeter's films, whose archetype can be found in images of Christ, and who carries a decidedly homoerotic charge.²⁸ It is this figuration of the male homosexual who appears to have fully inherited the powers of the melancholic.

The fact that most of these figures are female is significant to Schroeter's development of the allegorical mode, for as Christine Buci-Glucksmann has pointed out, the feminine can be located "in the midst of Benjamin's central concepts of allegory, modernity, experience, and empathy with the commodity."²⁹ In fact, as I shall discuss shortly, through Baudelaire, Benjamin recognized woman and the prostitute, in particular, as the allegory of modernity par excellence. Furthermore, Buci-Glucksmann suggests that these female figures embody a particularly allegorical temporality. She writes:

The feminine might well be one of these 'primal historical forms' (*urgeschichtlichen Formen*) of the nineteenth century, an origin (*Ursprung*) in which a 'pre-history' and a 'post-history' (*Vor- und Nachgeschichte*), the archaic and the modern, are dialectically articulated.³⁰

Schroeter's female figures take up their place in this tradition, but in the context of the late twentieth century, it is the nineteenth century that has become archaic. Schroeter's allegorical figures are marked by the specifically theatrical or spectacle-based element that constitutes them and through the way they point to the ruinous nature of the commodity forms from which they derive. They are all figures of and figure the processes of reproduction that create them and all are marked by an intense physicality. Their inner characteristics are manifested outwardly on their bodies in a complex configuration of gestural quotations. Through these gestural quotations these bodies begin to work their allegorical power and break down the illusory totality of the cultural forms they represent.

The Diva and the Singer

The Diva, as her name suggests, is the first and foremost allegorical figure of Schroeter's films. One could even go so far as to say that she is the model for all of the other female allegorical figures who circulate through his films. The Diva is quite literally the 'prima donna', Schroeter's 'first woman'. And this first woman is embodied by Maria Callas. Not only does Schroeter ascribe his love of opera to hearing a recording of her voice as a child, but her image, in the form of press and 'private' photographs and recordings of arias, for which she became famous, constitute the image- and sound-matter of several of his earliest 8mm films. According to an account of these films given by Sebastian Feldmann, they consisted of photographs of the singer put together in a rhythmic montage of images. In *Callas Walking Lucia*, Schroeter even takes photographs of Callas in the role of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and animates her dramatic but static cry through rapidly montaging a series of still images together.³¹ This crude animation, where false movement is effected in the space between images, in the cut, could well constitute one of the very first 'gestures' in Schroeter's films; Callas' cry out of the depths of time. The frozen moment (the past present) of the photograph serves as the point of departure for a leap into the past. Montage shuffles us between regions of past.

In yet another film, *Mona Lisa* (1968), Schroeter constructs a 35-minute film from only three images: two of Callas and a reproduction of Leonardo Da Vinci's painting *Mona Lisa*. According to Feldmann, Schroeter "magnifies these photographs in ever greater degrees of detail until the point at which they reach unrecognisability through abstraction."³² Feldmann reads this as Schroeter pushing toward the limits of the photographic image, to the point at which the image reveals itself to be pure surface. The pigment of the skin that the camera makes a vain attempt to grasp, to touch, dissipates under the smooth, glossy surface of the photograph.³³ Schroeter's strategy in *Mona Lisa* is certainly reminiscent of the formal experiments of structuralist filmmakers of the 1960s, such as Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967), and recalls the futile search for meaning dispersed in the increasing graininess of a photographic

image that is 'blown up' to the point of abstraction in Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1966). But Schroeter is neither attempting to reveal the underlying structure of the photographic image, nor is he suggesting the futility of searching for meaning within the grain of the image itself. Schroeter is interested in the image as reproduction, as *repetition*: Maria Callas as an unattainable object of desire. To 'touch' or gaze upon her image too closely causes her to disappear, to disintegrate. This is highlighted further by the soundtrack on which, according to Feldmann, Schroeter uses recordings of Callas singing arias from the operas of Cherubini, Verdi and Donizetti intermingled with fragments of pop songs sung by Catarina Valente edited together in repetitive sound loops. The effect, says Feldmann, "is reminiscent of the a-rhythmic jump of a record-player needle" on a scratched record.³⁴ A kind of acoustic 'jumpcut'.

According to Feldmann's reading of *Mona Lisa*, Schroeter treats Callas and Valente equally. In Schroeter's film, the Diva and the pop singer are both presented as products of the mass-media recording and film industries, and as such this demonstrates, according to Feldmann, that for Schroeter "the concept of 'Art' is broken", like the reproduction of da Vinci's painting, neither star is received as an "original", but only as a reproduction.³⁵ The distinction between high and low deteriorate, they enter into a crystalline circuit. In *Mona Lisa*, Schroeter does not appear to be idolizing and idealizing his idol, but rather, as Feldmann suggests, "the filmmaker decomposes the idol." Schroeter does not attempt to reinvest the image and voice with 'aura', but rather, as Feldmann suggests, uses them as "materials for a kind of creative destruction."³⁶ Callas never appears in Schroeter's films as 'flesh and blood', as she did almost contemporaneously in Pasolini's *Medea* (1969), but as 'image', both picture and voice.³⁷ Furthermore, Schroeter seems all too aware of the fragility of this 'image', of the processes of time and decay to which it is subject and of the 'death' that the recorded and reproduced image and sound implies.³⁸

'Performing' only as a variety of still images in Schroeter's films, Callas does not perform the histrionic operatic gestures for which she is famous, and for which she has attained a cult following, especially amongst the gay community. Indeed the "Callas cult", as Wayne Koestenbaum has called this predominantly male homosexual obsession with Callas, hinges upon Callas as a lost object.³⁹ But, as object never actually attained, she is a melancholy object of loss, rather than an actual object of mourning.⁴⁰ To most she is obtainable only through recordings, photographs and films. Furthermore, according to Koestenbaum, it is because of her flaws that she is adored. He writes:

I worship her because she made mistakes, and because she seemed to value expressivity over loveliness. We don't believe in nature any more, but Callas put forth the effect of nature as opposed to the appearance of order, and offered an acceptable, digestible anarchy, a set of sounds on the verge of chaos – but enjoyably so. Here lay the danger, the lure: she was a mess *and* she was a goddess.⁴¹

Schroeter appears to be in accord with this attitude. In Schroeter's films Callas' gestures are frozen in the photographic instant, dead but eternally secure. She is an allegorical object, an emblem. Her image and voice returns intermittently throughout Schroeter's first feature-length film *Eika Katappa*, and her voice, along with other operatic Divas such as Conchita Supervia, returns again and again throughout his career. Schroeter's obsession with the figure of the Diva culminates in his film *Poussières d'amour (Love's Debris)*, for which he invited various opera divas, young and old, to rehearse arias in a ruined French abbey in order to ask the question of how singers find expression in their voices.

Callas is not the only Diva who is figured directly in Schroeter's films. His 1971 film *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* is centred around the death of the nineteenth-century mezzo-soprano Maria Malibran, who is said to have quite literally sung herself to death. In a similar way to the reproduced manifestation of Callas in the early 8mm films, *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* intensifies and deconstructs the operatic mode of performance by focusing upon the the diva's own death scene. In Schroeter's film, Malibran is portrayed by one of his regular cast members and long-time collaborator Magdalena Montezuma, who also plays several other roles during the course of the film, which, like *Eika Katappa*, is constructed in a series of disconnected tableaux. In the final death sequence Montezuma/Malibran appears on stage. She is shot in profile, the camera at a low angle looking up at her, idolizing her. Montezuma sketches the death of this persona with a few light strokes. The powers of the false play an important role in her death as Schroeter disregards the historical place of Malibran's actual death in Manchester, relocating it by way of an intertitle to "an evening with Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt" in Berlin, although even this location is nothing but a rather non-descript stage. Schroeter downplays the importance of historical context in order to show us an allegorical life that is exhausted, consumed by its own intensity. For Schroeter, Malibran could have died anywhere, as long as it was on a stage! The scene could well have been shot anywhere, consisting simply of a curtain and a shallow stage area with some ivy and painted scenery in the background. Malibran's death consists of a few obliquely angled tableau shots from a static camera. Two women are seen on stage singing a duet. One is dressed in white, the other, Magdalena Montezuma as Malibran, in red (red is a colour of emotional intensity throughout Schroeter's films). They mime a duet (the sound is post-dubbed and asynchronized). There is a short montage sequence of disconnected images and then a close-up of Montezuma/Malibran's face surrounded by ivy, bright red 'blood' oozing from the corner of her mouth.⁴² Then we return to the shot of the two women singing before Montezuma/Malibran falls down dead into a bed of ivy, blood oozes from her mouth: a reframed repetition of the earlier shot. A man enters the scene to check her pulse, but she is dead. On the soundtrack we hear the crackling sounds of a record that has played out to the end. Montezuma interprets Malibran's death with little of the theatricality and histrionics that we expect of the opera, but it is still excessive by its very minimalism. Magdalena Montezuma interprets various other operatic roles in *Eika Katappa* where, for instance, she sketches out fragments from the role of Tosca in Puccini's opera, including the famous death/suicide scene, and plays the part of Rigoletto (the

hunchback jester) from Verdi's opera with a few brief but slightly more histrionic flourishes. In the same film Gisela Trowe's Violetta from Verdi's *La Traviata* is figured through a series of fairly static poses as she mimes asynchronously to recordings of the opera, not only in the original Italian, but also in German and presented in non-chronological order. At times, too, Trowe's performance shifts from operatic performance into the area of performance art when, for instance, her limp body, still in full, glittering costume but isolated against a black background, is suspended, held from above by her upper arms by two pairs of male hands, the tension of the muscles contrasting with Trowe's limp body.

As I noted earlier, Schroeter attempts to break down the distinction between so-called high art and popular culture. He begins to do so very early in his career through the popular music of Catarina Valente. Just as the Diva is figured in death and in the death scene, in *Eika Katappa* the musical star becomes the object of a similarly allegorical treatment. In part three of the film, Carla Aulaulu portrays a music star in the process of decline. She is something of a composite figure, at once pop star, nightclub entertainer and prima donna. In his English synopsis of the film, Schroeter describes her as a "famous Primadonna."⁴³ Her story is not told by the film, but rather shown in a collection of independent tableaux through which her life is reminisced. Like the Siegfried and Kriemhild episode discussed in chapter three, the entire episode has the unstructured quality of involuntary memories. Rather than being able to locate the point from which the reminiscences depart, as in a true recollection-image, there is no present from which to fix our point of view. As Deleuze says of the recollection-image, which is most commonly represented by the flashback: "The question of the flashback is this: it has to be justified from elsewhere, just as recollection-images must be given the internal mark of the past from elsewhere."⁴⁴ Schroeter gives us no such justification. There is no attempt, either through costume or make-up to mark each image with a particular temporality, thus within each moment her fate is contained, and that fate is to die a lonely death on a country road.

We see Carla during various moments of performance, several times in seedy bars, soaking in the adoration of her fans. In the opening scene of this part of the film, Carla teeters atop a high bar stool singing "Ich werd' dich nie, nie, nie, nie vergessen..." (I will never, never, never, never forget you). It is Carla's own voice, but the sound is post-dubbed and considerably out of sync with her image. Furthermore, her voice, which is not accompanied by music, often falters, dropping in and out of register as she sings, and the song is performed with a rather uncomfortable syncopated rhythm. Her gestures, too, seem to falter. In yet another performance in a nightclub, she is apparently drunk and unable to maintain her composure. At one point we see her run into an open-air amphitheatre (the same setting that was used for Kriemhild's descent into memory) into the arms of her lover who is waiting to greet her. They embrace, kiss and awkwardly dance a waltz.

In a particularly effective scene she appears as E. T. A. Hoffmann's mechanical puppet, Olympia, who must be wound up in order to move. On the soundtrack we

hear the coloratura Aria of Ophelia's madness from Ambroise Thomas' *Hamlet*. According to Feldmann's reading of this scene, Schroeter makes a correspondence between stardom, machine and madness.⁴⁵ In the manufacturing process of the star, eventual breakdown is inevitable. Schroeter manifests this as a breakdown of the gestural sphere and the separation of body from voice. Voice is no longer, therefore sensory-motor, but rather functions as a pure sound-image. The inevitable death of the singer occurs on a lonely country road. In a scene very similar to the one of the dying man I described earlier in this chapter, Aulaulu runs with a stumbling gait toward the camera on a deserted country road. As she approaches the camera she collapses to the ground, reaching upwards desperately with her hand as if pleading for assistance. As she does so, she utters the following words: "Life is very precious, even right now..." As she completes the phrase, she sighs heavily and expresses the last breath from her now almost lifeless body. But in true Schroeterian fashion, these words and the breath have already been disengaged from her body, obviously recorded in a studio and post-dubbed, with no ambient sounds to anchor it either to her body or to the place of her death. A young man then enters the frame to close her eyes, but true to the powers of the false, they close of their own accord before the man is able to complete his action. In his English synopsis, Schroeter embellishes her story a little by writing:

Thinking of her sinful unnatural life the fragile pop-star revisits the beautiful countryside of her youth. Then she has to die on a lonesome and dirty road, sighing helplessly: 'Life is very precious, even right now...' while her younger brother is coming to close her broken eyes forever.⁴⁶

This sequence is repeated in slightly different forms several times throughout the film, figuring death as an infinitely repeatable moment, as an allegorical image locked in the allegorical temporality of eternal fleetingness, but at the same time it points to the commodification and fetishisation of the 'death scene' in the products of western culture: opera, popular music, film and television.

There is one further figure who appears in Schroeter's film *Der lachende Stern* as a kind of diva/star, but one who, rather than inspiring devotion and adoration in the spectator, brings on derision and abhorrence for all that she stands for. While she is not a diva as such, this figure was literally a 'primadonna', the first lady of The Philippines: she is Imelda Marcos. Throughout the film, Lady Marcos exhibits the same attitudes and postures that are characteristic of Schroeter's opera Divas, as well as Carla's prima donna in *Eika Katappa*. Throughout the film, Lady Marcos generally appears on stage either giving speeches or, otherwise, quite literally, making a spectacle of herself by singing. In many shots Schroeter frames her profile in enormous close-up, not unlike the profiles of Maria Callas and Magdalena Montezuma as Maria Malibran that we have seen in earlier films, but here Marcos is depicted as a particularly grotesque figure. Her costume is written over with theatrical excess, the puffy sleeves of the Philippine national costume coutured into exceptionally distended billows.⁴⁷ These match her grand theatrical gestures and regal words, the duplicity of which reminds us of Shakespeare's despicable

matriarchs. In a speech, she refers to the people of her country as the Philippines' "greatest natural resource." But the subtext of her rhetoric implies that this human resource exists merely to be exploited, as one might, for instance, exploit the mineral resources of the earth, but the consequences being a great humanitarian rather than environmental disaster. She is worshipped like a queen or a celebrity by a group of young women who sing "beautiful Imelda...your beauty is like the sun..." But Schroeter allows Mrs Marcos, who was a cabaret singer before she married Ferdinand Marcos, to deconstruct her own image through her flawed and almost comic performance of the song *Feelings* at the opening ceremony of the inaugural Manila International Film Festival in ever faltering register.

Through the all too real figure of Imelda Marcos, Schroeter effectively collapses the distinctions between reality and fiction and shows the degradation that history and politics can afflict upon the idea of the 'primadonna,' as she descends from a virtual goddess in Maria Callas, through the unnatural life of the singing star, to the too-grotesque-to-be-true caricature of Imelda Marcos, First Lady of the Philippines.

The Revue Showgirl: History's Faulty Gestures

In *Der Bomberpilot*, Schroeter introduces yet another variation of the prima donna. She is the revue showgirl, and she appears in triplicate in *Der Bomberpilot*. Through the somewhat 'faulty gestures' of the film's three main protagonists, Schroeter articulates history as a particularly subjective and fragmentary form of remembering. In this film, Magdalena Montezuma, Carla Aulaulu and Mascha Elm play three women who were employed as dancers in Nazi revues during the Second World War.

The film opens with a tableau shot of the three women in corsets, stockings and stilettos dancing on the steps of a monumental building under the banner of a Nazi swastika. They link arms and kick their legs in the air, almost stumbling down the stairs in the process, although this does not register as slapstick. Their routine appears somewhat irregular and improvised, as do their mismatched costumes. Their movements are uncoordinated, awkward and a-rhythmic, the very antithesis of the highly ordered spectacle of the Nazi revues and revue films to which they allude. In doing so they evoke a kind of 'false memory' of that period of history. Karsten Witte has written of the German revue film under the Third Reich thus:

The revue film shows the civilian troops on parade, often garbed in uniforms and usually choreographed as a costumed cadence march. The fact that the 'girls' are on parade in these uniforms may heighten the erotic appeal, but actually degrades it through the massive deindividualization of those girls.⁴⁸

The revue girls are the "representatives of the female reserve army, who hold up the home front even as the warfront of male armies is collapsing."⁴⁹ Witte's use of the word 'girls' (in English in his German text) is deliberate, for the notion of 'girl culture' arose in Germany during the Weimar Republic in the 1920s. He writes: "The role of girl is the price that woman had to pay for her loss of magic, i.e. for her integration



Der Bomberpilot 1970. © Werner Schroeter

into the industrial work process of the Weimar Republic."⁵⁰ In *Der Bomberpilot*, Schroeter plays with this concept of 'girl'.

In the German revue film, the effectiveness of the spectacle derives, according to Witte, from the "accumulation of individually striking effects", and their ability to overwhelm the audience. Witte continues: "The geometrically hierarchical ordering not only inculcates discipline but alleviates the fear of chaos."⁵¹ Schroeter's three revue girls seem to mock the order and hierarchy of the Nazi revue by their lack of discipline, the vastly different shapes and sizes of the girls' bodies and their arrangement according to no apparent hierarchical order. Rather than alleviating chaos, they are its very embodiment. Through their bodies and their 'faults of performance', Schroeter's girls situate themselves at the juncture of the fault lines between history and memory, and it is for this reason that *Der Bomberpilot* is not a "minor" film, as Feldmann suggests, but a very important film within Schroeter's oeuvre.⁵²

I shall pre-empt my discussion of Brecht in the next chapter by invoking him at this point via the words of Walter Benjamin. In his "Conversations with Brecht", Benjamin remarks upon the importance of certain "faults of performance" to Brecht's theory of epic theatre. Such "faults of performance", which can be perceived in plays acted

by children, operate, writes Benjamin, “as distancing effects” and “import epic characteristics to the production.” A similar operation may be witnessed, adds Benjamin, “in third-rate provincial theatre.” Benjamin continues his reminiscence: “I mention the Geneva production of *le Cid* where the sight of the king’s crown worn crookedly on his head gave me the first inkling of the ideas I eventually developed in the *Traverspiel* book nine years later.”⁵³ Most of Schroeter’s films, especially those of the first and second phases, are filled with such faulty performances, performances which have a decidedly amateurish, improvised or rehearsal-like quality, even though most of his performers were in fact professional actors.⁵⁴

Unusually for Schroeter, the narrative of *Der Bomberpilot* appears to proceed in a linear fashion and is told through the voice-over commentary of the three female figures. The film is told through a series of recollections, although the present to which the voice-over belongs is never identified. Just as in the ‘primadonna’ section of *Eika Katappa*, these memory-images are not justified from elsewhere; the voice-over remains de-actualized. In addition, although the film gives the overall impression of proceeding chronologically, there are times where the film seems to jump back and forth between different regions of memory, inserting its own *Erinnerungsbilder* to interrupt the chronological flow.

At the beginning of the film, while we watch the girls dance under the swastika, Magdalena’s voice-over tells us: “After Mascha’s nervous breakdown, our professional opportunities became somewhat diminished. Quietly I threw my bag over my shoulder and hung up my corset. I approached every new movement just as I would a friend.” Although there are no strict historical markers to locate the break-up of the group at a particular point in time, the spectator is led to imagine that this occurs towards the end of the Second World War. Mascha’s nervous (sensory-motor) breakdown can be read emblematically as perhaps a result of the immense pressure placed on the ‘review girl’ in keeping up the illusory appearance of order at home, while the front lines were being decimated by allied forces. This could perhaps explain how the faulty performance of the opening sequence tends to allegorize this particular moment in history.

But the opening sequence can be read on another level as well; that is, not only in reference to history but to memory. The entire film consists of a disjointed series of dislocated recollection-images over which the voice-over of Magdalena can be heard. The voice-over frequently describes literally what occurs in the images, but there is frequently a disjunction between image and voice-over. The attitudes of the voice-over and image are often at odds. Although we are told that the girls danced in Nazi revues, the actions that we actually see them perform tell a different story: their awkward gestures seem to protest against the ordered and reified spectacles preserved in the revue films of the Nazi era. Like the crooked king’s crown of *Le Cid*, Mascha’s tiara even threatens to slip from her head. Schroeter does not seek to document the past, nor does he attempt to recreate it. He rather evokes an image of the past with the haphazard forgetfulness of an involuntary memory. The disjunction created between image and voice-over does not simply attempt to

displace the notion of the authoritative voice-over of classical cinema, but it figures the inevitable gaps in memory and the effort to recollect the past. It figures memory as partial and disjointed: memory as allegorical. The faulty gestures performed by Magdalena, Mascha and Carla do not disprove that their characters might have danced in the ordered spectacle of Nazi revues, but rather seem to allegorize the very act of remembering such events. Schroeter effectively integrates the very breakdown of the Nazi regime into the film's own memory of it, suggesting that the future was already an implicit aspect of the present moment.

With the figure of the revue girl, Schroeter also manages, as Deleuze might say, to extract an image from the cliché.⁵⁵ He lifts the 'girl' out of the processes of production that produced her. Schroeter effectively shatters the illusion of the cliché that keeps it circulating in the market as a commodity. As I noted above with reference to Witte's discussion of the Nazi revue film, the notion of 'girl culture' emerged during the Weimar Republic and coincides with women's entry into the sphere of industry and manufacturing. As such, she loses what Witte calls her "magic" or, in other words, her traditional role in the private sphere as wife and mother. Her right or ability to enter into the processes of natural reproduction are compromised, impeded or even displaced by the role she adopts in the industrial mode of production. Buci-Glucksmann writes succinctly of the new status of woman in the face of urbanization and the growth of commodity culture:

This violent insertion of women into the process of commodity production destroys traditional differences, whether material (...) or symbolic. As labour and society assume a mass character, women themselves become 'mass articles' and lose both their 'natural' qualities (female essence defined by the reproduction of life) and their poetic aura...⁵⁶

Thus, following Witte's argument, the Nazi revue takes this shift to the extreme, turning the 'girl' into a mass-produced article, forged with the orderly precision achieved only by the machinery of industry. She is estranged or alienated from her 'natural' process of reproduction and becomes, much like the diva in the mid twentieth century, a function of mechanical reproduction.

The 'girl', therefore, becomes an allegorical figure of woman marking the decay and decline of woman's symbolic place in pre-industrial society.⁵⁷ She has become a stereotype or personified cliché. Now, one of the characteristics of the new image which began to take the cinema beyond the movement-image after the Second World War was the "consciousness of clichés", the ability for the cinema to "extract an image from all the clichés and to set it up against them." "But how", asks Deleuze, "can the cinema attack the dark organisation of clichés, when it participates in their fabrication and propagation, as much as magazines or television." Deleuze answers the question with the following:

Perhaps the special conditions under which it produces and reproduces clichés allow certain directors to attain a critical reflection which they would not have at

their disposal elsewhere. It is the organisation of the cinema which means that, however great the controls which bear upon him, the creator has at his disposal at least a certain time to 'commit' the irreversible.⁵⁸

This attainment of critical reflection is not unlike the effect Brecht hoped to achieve through distanciation in his epic theatre, however, the cinema's own industrial processes of production make this critical distance much more difficult to achieve. Some directors such as Robert Altman, according to Deleuze, are "content to parody the cliché instead of giving birth to a new image."⁵⁹

Schroeter has sometimes been accused of parody, but I believe that films such as *Der Bomberpilot* engage in more than *just* parody. Schroeter's actors do not so much imitate the gestures of revue girls and variety performers, as quote them. Not only do Schroeter's performers such as Magdalena Montezuma and Carla Aulaulu *take on* the roles of such performers in that they play them seriously and intensely with a high degree of pathos, but they also *show* or *present* the very mode of presenting those roles by playing them too intensely. The excess creates a gap between the performer and the role, a strategy as we will see in the next chapter that was an important aspect of Brecht's epic theatre. In both *Der Bomberpilot* and *Eika Katappa*, Schroeter's actors play actors playing roles. Schroeter ostensibly achieves the familiar dramatic effect of a play within a play, but within a single figure, and with only a few rather improvised gestures.

Schroeter's performers in a sense hold a mirror up to the stereotypes that they quote and, in doing so, they extract an image from them. This image is a particularly allegorical one, for not only is it brought forth from the past as a memory-image, this image bears the marks of time. It shows the processes of decay in its somewhat faulty gesture-memories. To take Carla Aulaulu's portrayal of a cabaret singer later in *Der Bomberpilot* as an example, it is possible to say that not only does she portray the cabaret singer who is past her prime, but she also portrays herself as performer portraying a performer. While the character that Aulaulu portrays performs for an audience implied within the film, this relationship between performer and audience is complicated by the fact that on the soundtrack we are presented with 'canned' or pre-recorded applause and Aulaulu's own voice is also post-dubbed. Furthermore, Aulaulu herself performs for the sake of the spectator of the film. This puts the spectator of the film in a particularly awkward position, a position from which it is no longer possible to decide between the true and false. This begs the question: are the 'faults of performance' the 'fault' of Aulaulu or her character? It is in the impossibility of knowing the truth of performance that Aulaulu ultimately *interprets* her role and brings forth an image from the decaying cliché stamped out in the name of consumer culture.

The Prostitute

The revue girl, as an extension of the 'girl' who becomes integrated into the processes of mass production, is herself turned into a product of this production. For Benjamin and Baudelaire, it is the prostitute who occupies this place and becomes the allegorical figure of modernity par excellence. In "Central Park", Benjamin evokes

an image of the prostitute who, like the 'girl', signifies her estrangement from the domestic sphere:

'L'appareil sanglant de la Destruction' (The bloody apparatus of destruction) – these are the scattered household implements which – in the innermost chamber of Baudelaire's poetry – lie at the feet of the whore; she who has inherited all the powers of baroque allegory.⁶⁰

In Schroeter's 1978 film *Regno di Napoli*, two very different figures of the prostitute appear. One, Rosaria á Franches ('Franchie' for short), who invited us behind her curtain in chapter three of this book, is light, airy and ethereal. She smiles and dances everywhere, wandering the streets either alone or with a client who is invariably a member of the Allied liberating forces. She doesn't appear to have a home, except the curtain, which as we have seen is suitably devoid of space. However, Franchie does manage to maintain some links to the domestic sphere. In the opening episode of the film she acts as midwife, helping to bring one of the film's main protagonists, Vittoria Pagano, into the world. Mr Pagano, awaiting the birth of his first child in the square below, is told not to worry for, it is said that, Franchie had been a nurse before she migrated to Italy from France. She also helped to bring Vittoria's brother Massimo into the world and later in the film, after the death of his mother, Massimo comes to regard her as a mother figure, but one who can only teach him about the kind of 'love' you pay for. Franchie is therefore something of a contradictory figure. On the one hand, her light gestures and scant flowing clothing present her as a kind of bird, free from the constraints of mundane domestic existence; the liberated streetwalker. On the other hand, her existence is clearly tied to her commodification: we often see her engaged in commercial transactions for her services (she even pays Massimo a cut for bringing clients to her). At the end of the film, her beauty has disintegrated and she has become a discarded object doomed to die a lonely death, refusing to even recognize Massimo who tries in vain to help her. But they now live in separate worlds: Massimo has embraced the domestic sphere with a wife and children.

Pupetta Ferrantes, however, embodies a woman who has been integrated fully into the processes of mass production. Although Pupetta is not literally a prostitute, her looks and her gestures tell us she might well have been in the past. Her name is allegorical, as are most of the names in the film.⁶¹

'Pupetta' literally means 'puppet' or 'doll' and this side of her character is displayed most vividly by her heavily made-up face, her darkened eyes, bright red lipstick and beauty spot pencilled onto her cheek. Her fingernails, too, are brightly painted and somewhat claw-like. This is perhaps the first thing that ties her image to the stereotype of the prostitute. As Benjamin has written:

In the form which prostitution took in the great cities woman appears not merely as commodity but as mass-produced article. This is indicated in the artificial disguise of the individual expression in favour of a professional one, such as is brought about by the application of make-up.⁶²



Regno di Napoli 1978. Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek © Werner Schroeter

Her surname ties her to the world of mass production. Ferrantes derives from the Italian for 'iron', and Pupetta Ferrantes certainly has a cold dark side to her nature. She is the owner of a metal factory, but it seems that she is also in the business of manufacturing copies of herself. She is also tormented by the incessant noise of the production process. Vittoria works in the factory as a cleaner. One day, at the age of about fourteen, Pupetta summons Vittoria up to her office high above the factory floor. Pupetta begins by remarking how pretty Vittoria has become and offers her a 'better' job away from the grime and noise of the factory floor in Pupetta's own home. There, Pupetta tells her, she will work as a cleaner and meet a variety of "first class people". Unaware of the truth – Pupetta intends Vittoria to work as a prostitute – Vittoria agrees. As an emblem of what she intends Vittoria's new life to be, Pupetta takes a lipstick from her own handbag, smears it across Vittoria's lips and presents it to her as a 'gift'. Like the true 'businesswoman' she is, Pupetta seals the deal with a shot of liquor, forcing the reluctant Vittoria to drink.

Like any allegorical figure, Pupetta's 'character' is manifested by Schroeter not through any attempt to paint a psychological portrait of her, but rather through a series of superficial traits: the make-up, her gestures and her dark, cold stare. As an industrialist, Pupetta hopes to fashion Vittoria into a mass-produced article. With one 'touch' she threatens to ruin Vittoria's life, but Vittoria resists this threat by refusing the client and fleeing Pupetta's home.

Martyrs, Melancholics and Hysterics

According to Benjamin, the martyr and the melancholic are key allegorical figures in baroque allegory. The bodily disfigurement and physical pain of martyrdom is what "prepares the body of the living person for emblematic purposes."⁶³ The martyr is created through the allegorical processes of destruction and preservation: Only through its mortal destruction, through death and becoming a corpse, can the body of the martyr be redeemed as a sacred, eternal body. In other words, martyrdom marks, scars and disperses the body, tortures it with its own mortality, so that the spirit might enter the realm of the eternal. In the *Traverspiel* book, Benjamin aligns the martyr with the melancholic through the experience of the prophetic dream, which is common to both.⁶⁴ The melancholic, whose most archetypal manifestation appears in the figure of the 'sorrowful contemplator', is the one figure who is most attuned to the 'allegorical way of seeing'. With his downward gaze he casts his destructive allegorical eyes upon the world of things.

In Schroeter's cinema, it is the 'sad young men' and the homosexuals who become the bearers of such a gaze. But Schroeter does not attribute the destructive gaze of allegory only to these male characters, for his female characters are similarly capable of such allegorical ways of seeing. Traditionally, melancholy has been considered a purely male affliction, the corresponding but somewhat degrading affliction appropriate to women is traditionally that of hysteria. Although Schroeter seems to maintain the gender divisions of these afflictions it is to the feminine that he most frequently grants the destructive powers of allegory. It is Schroeter's women (and his somewhat feminized men)

who most profoundly mount a protest against the processes of production and the institutional organizations of society in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In all cases, the signs of their respective afflictions are manifested externally upon their bodies, either through the physical mutilation of the flesh, or through a breakdown in the gestural sphere.

The first appearance of a martyr in Schroeter's films occurs in *Eika Katappa* in the figure of Therese von Konnersreuth (portrayed by Magdalena Montezuma), the Bavarian nun who is said to have experienced the stigmata and had visions of Christ's Passion during the 1920s. She did not die from her experiences, but rather felt the Passion of Christ in her own body. Montezuma plays her very minimally. Her face is shot in close-up smeared with the blood of the stigmata, and she performs simple gestures of religious devotion. Saint Sebastian is also depicted in this film by the same blonde man we met dying on a country road earlier in this chapter. Saint Sebastian is figured in a very simple tableau composition. He is lashed semi-naked between two trees. His body is scarred with the wounds inflicted by arrows and on his head he wears a crown of thorns.⁶⁵ He is accompanied by three wailing women. In *Regno di Napoli* we encounter another and perhaps more significant martyr. Schroeter elevates Mrs Pagano, the mother of the film's main protagonists Vittoria and Massimo, to the status of a modern martyr, marked by the stigma(ta) of poverty. As Massimo says towards the end of the film: "This filthy air is killing us." It is not literally the filthy air that had killed Mrs Pagano earlier in the film, but the social environment, which drains her body of its life and its energy. Despite her married name, which literally means 'pagan', Mrs Pagano is a devout Christian, struggling to hold on to the values of the Catholic Church in a society that has undergone great upheavals and social fragmentation. Indeed this is played out within the family unit itself, for Mr Pagano is highly suspicious of the Catholic Church and refuses to allow Vittoria to attend the local convent school. Such fragmentation is both symptom and cause of the disintegration of values; firstly, as a result of the Second World War and, then, secondly, in the political turmoil that followed in its wake, especially in Naples where the film is set.⁶⁶ Mrs Pagano manifests the dispersal of the church under such conditions, upon her own body, firstly, through her gestures, and, finally, in her dramatic death sequence. In one particular scene we see Mrs Pagano at work, cleaning the floors of a large, opulent apartment. As she works she is clearly overcome with an immense lethargy. Her entire body becomes limp and eventually comes to a rest upon the floor. At this point she begins to sing a mournful folk song. The song, which is about the search for love, seems to momentarily transport her out of her material situation. The camera momentarily floats out through an open window behind her into the vast blue sky. But the song's final words bring her back to her present situation: "love is no more." We see her limp body collapsed on the floor.

Shortly afterwards, we witness Mrs Pagano's dramatic death. The scene opens with Mrs Pagano lying in bed, her husband by her side and a crucifix clutched in her hands. Suddenly, she cries out and her body begins to convulse. As it does so, her hands push away the sheets to reveal the blood that has been seeping from her

womb. Suddenly, the screaming stops and her body lies unmoving on the bed. She is dead. Between the various stages of her death, Schroeter weaves a montage of evocative images and sounds: a statue of Mary; the reflection in a window of a train rushing past; the sound of a train; drums beating. These images and sounds build to a crescendo, the climax of which coincides with the very moment of her death. The beating drums stop suddenly. The image cuts to that of an elaborately carved black and gold baroque hearse drawn by horses over cobblestone streets (a reference perhaps to the royalty of a past age), and the soothing sounds of a lyrical folk song can be heard, a relief from the intense drama of the preceding sequence. Mrs Pagano is at peace. The screams and the blood that issue forth from her body moments before her death function like the expulsion of the dirt, the despair and the “filthy air” that had seeped into her from her surroundings. Mrs Pagano is an archaic figure who no longer has a place in the disjointed world that surrounds her. She is a martyr to time, to the anachronism of the faith to which she devotes herself, a faith presented by the film as one that has been superseded by politics, by the power of the Christian Democrats who also feature in the film in the grotesque figure of Palumbo. It takes an allegorical emblem of such faith to reveal this succession.

Despite her powerful figuration in the figure of Mrs Pagano, the martyr is, however, a somewhat minor figure in Schroeter’s work. The melancholic, or rather the ‘sad young man’, is a rather more ubiquitous figure. He is represented by some of the characters I have already discussed. One example is Nicola from *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* who proceeds through the film as one who ‘sees’ rather than acts. The young man who dies on a lonely country road in *Eika Katappa*, as well as Saint Sebastian, played by the same actor, could be considered as further examples, the latter serving to make the connection between the martyr and the melancholic. The semi-nakedness of this figure provides but a hint of the (homo)erotic purposes to which a similar figure will be put many years later in *Der Rosenkönig*.

However, in the seventh part of *Eika Katappa*, Schroeter does treat the male homosexual as an allegorical figure in possession of a melancholy disposition, and as a figure whose fate is also that of a martyr. Through the “history of two lovely young men, loving each other desperately”,⁶⁷ Schroeter effectively equates homosexuality with the affective quality of *Leidenschaft*, a kind of passionate suffering closely associated with the Passion of Christ.⁶⁸

Near the beginning of this part of the film, we see a father warning his son about the evils of becoming involved with “perverse strangers”.⁶⁹ He lectures his son about finding a job so that he can take up his appropriate place in the household, and therefore in society. The father conforms to the wildly gesticulating stereotype of the southern Italian, but the son protests his otherness from this stereotype through his silence, his passivity and his downward gaze. With this contrast of gestural modes, Schroeter already marks the young man as a somewhat melancholy individual, one who is different from other men.

Despite his father's warnings, the young man continues to see his lover. In the scenes where they are seen together, however, there appear to be forces which keep them at a certain distance from one another. Although they hold hands, their grasp of each other is light, as though they might easily be torn apart. Instead, they seem to engage in a kind of haptic gaze which at once holds them together but keeps them at a distance as they wander, like *flâneurs* aimlessly through the streets of Naples.

After a few more scenes showing the two young men together, the film cuts to a view along a busy street. In the foreground, the son lies motionless on the ground, while the father approaches the body from the depth of the shot, showing his grief in large histrionic gestures and through his unsynchronized moans on the soundtrack. The traffic rushes by with banal regularity, further concentrating and containing the drama within the bodies of the performers. The father then lifts his son's lifeless body into his arms, at which point the two bodies form a kind of *pietà* image reminiscent not only of artistic representations of Christ's body held in the Virgin's arms, but also of an image from Kenneth Anger's gay underground film *Fireworks* (1947).⁷⁰ But this 'eternal' image of death is countered a few scenes later when we see the young man's lover dragging his lifeless body up a grassy coastal hillside, straining at the material pull of the dead weight. Now his body is wholly mortal and transitory. Through this body, Schroeter appears to be figuring the opposing forces of nature and society. In a society such as the devoutly Catholic south of Italy, homosexuality is considered 'unnatural' and 'perverse'. The father must return the son's body into the symbolic order, into its 'correct' place in society. In contrast, the lover attempts to resist the reifying processes of social forces upon the individual, and return the young man's body to the earth. In doing so he attempts to confirm the natural impulses that underlie homosexuality. The young male homosexual thus effectively becomes an allegorical image of the dialectical forces at work between nature and society and the lack of freedom to desire differently in such a society.

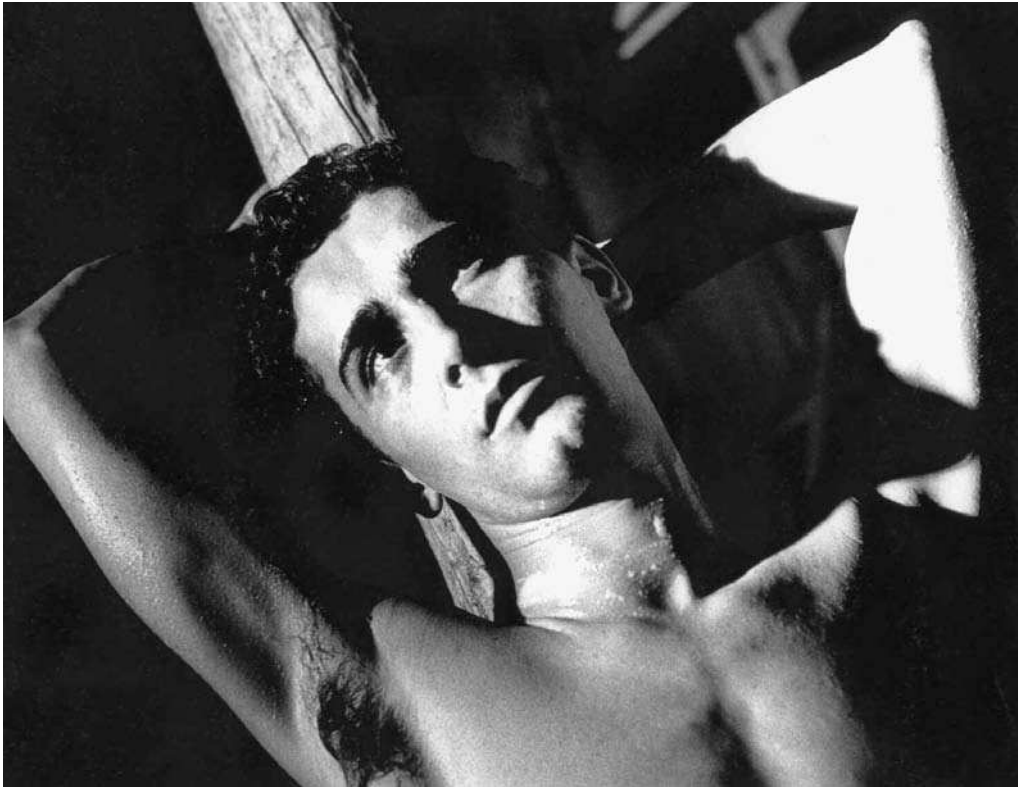
In *Der Rosenkönig*, Schroeter plays out this dialectic at length and in far greater detail than in any of his other films. Schroeter rarely concentrates on issues of homosexuality in his films, a fact that led Rosa von Praunheim, Schroeter's former colleague and partner, to publish a scathing attack against him in 1979.⁷¹ In *Der Rosenkönig*, Schroeter employs imagery which not only has a long history in gay iconography, but which also attained a particular currency in the American gay underground cinema of the 1950s and 1960s. These include: fire, fireworks, running water, and perhaps even more importantly, the homoeroticization of Christ who becomes the archetype of the particularly melancholic figure of the 'sad young man'.⁷² According to Richard Dyer, "Christ is the supreme instance of a ritually significant sad young man in Western tradition."⁷³ Dyer identifies various traditions through which the homosexual becomes equated with the lonely, sensitive, suffering individual and who finds his way into films of the American gay underground movement. One is through Robert Duncan's notion of the romantic cult of the artist or poet as an exceptional individual whose "isolate sufferings [are] converted into the poet's intangible 'nobility'."⁷⁴ The other is through Freudian inspired

psychoanalytic discourses. Dyer writes: "Homosexuals in this psychoanalytical discourse are 'inevitably' unhappy and guilt-ridden."⁷⁵ Through these discourses comes the idea of the 'sad young man' who is "beautiful but melancholy."⁷⁶ Benjamin links impotence and solitude to the *flâneur's* ability to bring the forces of production to a standstill: "The *flâneur* protests with his ostentatious languor (*Gelassenheit*) against the process of production."⁷⁷ The solitary melancholy individual also becomes a potent figure of gay erotic iconography, for he is a figure who, by his very nature, protests against the natural forces of human reproduction, and therefore against the social stereotypes of masculinity, which are themselves culturally encoded.⁷⁸

In *Der Rosenkönig*, Schroeter appears to borrow much of his imagery from the American gay underground cinema of the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, throughout his films Schroeter also exhibits the "ability to hold together intense devotion to something" which, according to Dyer, characterizes much gay culture. However, I would argue that Schroeter does not exhibit the same degree of "irony or even derision" that Dyer adds, is a simultaneous aspect of such devotion.⁷⁹ Rather than irony, Schroeter employs the dialectical form of allegory.

The occupation of *Der Rosenkönig's* main protagonist, Albert (played by Mostéfa Djadjam), involves just this kind of intense devotion, for he is a gardener who cultivates roses. In fact, his occupation is figured as something of an obsession, an obsession to cultivate the perfect rose. However, early in the film, a particularly haptic encounter between Albert and another young man (Fernando, played by Antonio Orlando) gives this obsession a new direction. A few minutes into the film, Albert catches Fernando in the chapel on his property in the act of stealing the devotional offerings. The *mise en scène* is a highly theatrical composition, with dozens of candles filling the chapel with light. As Albert reaches out to catch Fernando, the film cuts to a close-up of his hand as it grasps the young man's upper arm. The camera pauses and lingers to observe the gesture of Albert's hand, which does not so much apprehend the young man by 'holding' or 'grasping' him, but gently pauses to feel the muscular contours of his arm beneath his shirt. We witness the powers of haptic fascination at work. With this image, Schroeter creates not only a subtle erotic encounter between the two men, but also seems to put the gesture of the allegorical 'touch' to work which turns the young man into an allegory.

As the film progresses, Albert detains the young man in a barn and begins to display even more traits of the melancholic. At one point his mother says to him, "Albert, you are no longer a gardener, but a dreamer", and at another point he ponders the meaning of the word 'to dream' as he teaches himself Portuguese: "To dream...dream...to dream with eyes open", he muses to himself. Albert is also associated with a variety of dream-like montage sequences, although they are not rendered as traditional dream sequences, but rather as the film's own involuntary memories. He also becomes the subject of a dream-like prophesy that is repeated as a refrain throughout the film. Spoken by his mother, the prophesy says: "If two children kiss without being able to speak, then one of them must die." Perhaps it is



Der Rosenkönig 1984-6. Courtesy of Filmmuseum Berlin –Deutsche Kinemathek © Werner Schroeter

not so much a prophesy, but rather the judgement of a maternal figure who does not approve of the liaison between her son and Fernando.⁸⁰ The inability to speak recalls Oscar Wilde's famous phrase used against him in the trial that condemned him for his homosexuality: "The love that dare not speak its name." But Schroeter does not settle for this rather outmoded version of homosexuality, but proceeds allegorically to prepare the homoerotic body for emblematic purposes. Albert attempts to resist the words of the prophesy by teaching himself to speak Portuguese.

Throughout the film, Fernando is associated with Christ and various Christian rituals and images.⁸¹ Through these associations, his naked body is not only associated with Christ, and later with Saint Sebastian, but it is clearly the source of Albert's homoerotic desire. But with his melancholy gaze, Albert cannot help but afflict this body with the destructiveness of allegory. He does this by performing a kind of allegorical montage upon the body itself, a montage that brings together his obsession with creating the perfect rose and his own homoerotic desires.

Schroeter prepares his spectators for the film's final emblematic montage earlier in the film by showing Albert grafting roses. He slices into the stem of the stock plant, creating a groove into which he places the graft. This is bound together to create a

new variety of rose. Towards the end of the film, Albert practices this method of cultivation upon Fernando's body. In a close-up we see Albert make incisions into Fernando's limbs, and then finally and fatally into his heart. He places a red rose into each wound, recalling the arrows that pierced the body of Saint Sebastian. Blood flows profusely, mixing with the blood red of the roses. Finally, Albert carries the young man's corpse into the garden and places him amongst the rose plants.

With this corporeal montage, Schroeter enacts a complex allegory of homosexuality. In horticulture, grafting is a form of artificial reproduction and is used particularly for the development of new and special varieties of roses and other plants. Through grafting, plants such as roses enter the realm of history, they become *cultured* objects and objects of culture: they thus reflect the human desire to contain and control nature. At the same time, however, as natural objects they are also subject to the destructive effects of time. These effects not only relate to death but also to the production of new life. Once the cultured plant withers and dies, its seeds produce only the inferior variety of the host plant. Each one must be grafted anew. As in the grafted rose, in the sacred, dispersed, emblematic body of Fernando, the antinomies of what Benjamin referred to as the nature-history dialectic are played out.⁸² As Benjamin has said of the writers of the baroque: "nature was not seen by them in bud and bloom, but in the over-ripeness and decay of her creations",⁸³ and history manifested itself as a "petrified primordial landscape."⁸⁴

Echoing Benjamin, Schroeter evokes this dialectical tension between nature and culture, which also involves conflicting temporalities:

The rose is simultaneously an emblem of perfection and transitoriness. It is a multifaceted cipher for man's longing (*Sehnsucht*). It may be that it finds its fulfilment in the conflict of opposing temporal forces: between the states of physical eroticism and mystical ecstasy.⁸⁵

Thus through the mortified, dispersed and erotic body of Fernando, Schroeter presents an allegorical image of petrified unrest, one which ultimately enables him to extract an 'image' from the stereotype of the homosexual perpetuated by a homophobic society, as a perversion of nature. Schroeter reveals that to pervert the course of nature, to imbue things with an illusory wholeness, is a much more general human tendency in western society through which cultural artefacts are created. The homoerotic body in *Der Rosenkönig* is achieved through showing the processes of cutting and violating, which are usually concealed or disavowed in the act of producing cultural forms such as works of art, operas, music or indeed films.

In his book on the Italian film-maker Pier Paolo Pasolini, Sam Rohdie draws upon one of Pasolini's own fantasies in which he identifies himself with the figure of Christ. In doing so he produces an erotic image out of the cultural desecration of the body. Pasolini writes:

In my fantasies there was expressly the desire to imitate Christ in his sacrifice for others, to be condemned to death and killed although innocent. I saw myself hanging from the Cross, nailed to it. My thighs were scantily covered by a light piece of cloth and a huge crowd was looking at me. That public martyrdom became for me something voluptuous...With my arms spread out, my hands and feet nailed, I was utterly defenceless, lost.⁸⁶

For Rohdie, such stories of dismemberment “describe an eroticism which connects with the act of cutting and framing in film. The cut is tender and painful, compassionate and creative, and also, of necessity, violent. It violates wholeness.”⁸⁷ This is also the case with the erotically disfigured body of Fernando in *Der Rosenkönig*, but it cannot be equated with just any form of cutting and framing in film. This is not the seamless linkage of fragments that we find in organic montage, but rather the kind of montage whose importance lies in the cut itself. Schroeter achieves the violation of wholeness through the destructive violence of allegorical montage, which in this case afflicts the body with its allegorical intention. The illusory wholeness of the idol is dispersed, but its erotic power remains intact. Schroeter’s film does not mount a social critique on the representation of homosexuals in western society, but rather opens a space with its violent and erotic imagery (the combination of which is often prone to severe censorship) in which the desire to desire differently may be activated.

Throughout his cinema, Schroeter also presents women who brush against the grain of cultured society. These include the three women in *Willow Springs* who live in the desert, secluded from the rhythms of history, politics and men, and the three ex-Nazi revue girls in *Der Bomberpilot* who protest with their faulty gestures against the tug of official history and against the reified spectacles that produced them. Two women in particular manifest their protest against ordered patriarchal culture through bodily afflictions that interfere with their ability to act ‘properly’ in society. These women are Carole Schneider from *Tag der Idioten*, played by Carole Bouquet, and the nameless character played by Isabelle Huppert in *Malina*. I shall call them hysterics, for it is against the stereotype of the hysterical woman that they brush.

The stereotype of the hysterical woman has a long history. Her appearance in the Hollywood melodramas of the 1950s is only a relatively recent manifestation. Hysteria, like melancholy, is a disease with ancient origins. In fact, as Laurinda Dixon has pointed out, the two diseases manifest similar, if not identical symptoms: depression, mood swings, hallucinations, pallor, abdominal upsets, fainting and so on.⁸⁸ But historically the two afflictions were differentiated along gender lines. Their cause and therefore their cure differed accordingly. In the seventeenth century, “melancholia became absorbed into the very fabric of popular culture as a fashionable pose for wealthy young men with pretensions.”⁸⁹ Melancholy was thought to be brought on in the man of creative genius when the “vigorous fire of inspiration yielded suddenly to cold, charred ashes.”⁹⁰ In order to cure such conditions, doctors recommended periods of steady mental activity. In contrast, hysteria was considered a sickness of the uterus, and hysterical women, especially

unmarried ones were often considered to be frigid. Women were advised against intellectual activities and were instead encouraged to marry, have regular intercourse and busy themselves with domestic chores.⁹¹ Furthermore, Dixon argues that during the seventeenth century, the threat of illness was used as a way of restricting the behaviour of women, and of containing the threat they might pose to the order of patriarchal society. Women who attempted to gain more freedom and power, some even cross-dressing and assuming male identities, were soon reeled in by the authorities who began “legislating female behaviour, even to the extent of controlling feminine fashion.”⁹² Dixon continues: “Women were required to exchange swords and daggers for needles and replace their ‘gyant-like behaviours’ with modest, restrained gestures.”⁹³ All of this “ultimately had the effect of restricting women to their homes.”⁹⁴ It is not surprising then, that the dominant representations of hysterical women in the twentieth century occur in the domestic melodrama, where once again the threat posed by women to the patriarchal social order is contained by reaffirming the dominant order and reinstating the woman into her ‘rightful’ place in the home.

Neither *Tag der Idioten* nor *Malina* could be considered melodramas. Ulrike Sieglöhr’s claim that “film studies’ methodology developed for analysing melodrama provides us with most of the conceptual tools for understanding Schroeter’s films”, is at best problematic.⁹⁵ In fact Schroeter’s heroines are generated both gesturally and cinematically to offer not so much a threat as an alternative to the restoration of order towards which even the most excessive of cinematic melodramas tend. Timothy Corrigan has suggested that “Schroeter’s female characters are the figures who resist history most effectively, quite literally freezing the passage of time into statically wearied and timelessly wrinkled expressions of mortality.”⁹⁶ This is indeed what Carole in *Tag der Idioten* and the Huppert character in *Malina* do. Through their disjointed, ‘anti-social’ or ‘hysterical’ gestures they resist the mechanisms, routines and institutions of society. They resist the illusory totality of manufactured beauty.

In *Malina*, Huppert literally brings traffic to a halt every time she crosses the road, figuratively interrupting the transitive processes of society. She never simply moves from point A to B without making a detour, her post-dubbed voice⁹⁷ is out of sync, and her eyeline looks are invariably mismatched. This resistance is not developed as fully in *Malina* as it is in *Tag der Idioten* where Schroeter couches the development of the hysterical woman within the terms of mental illness but does not allow her rebelliousness to be reduced simply to madness.

Schroeter frames the film with images of the moon, which has long been associated with madness or ‘lunacy’. In doing so, he seems to place the entire film into quotation marks, he ‘tableaus’ the entire film. In fact, Schroeter seems to allude to a common characteristic of the *Traversspiel*, which was according to Benjamin to set the dramatic action at midnight. He writes: “It lies in the widespread notion that at this hour time stands still.” Benjamin calls this “the narrow frame of midnight, an opening in the passage of time.”⁹⁸ Although *Tag der Idioten* does not literally take place over a single night, I believe that Schroeter nevertheless attempts just this kind of “opening in the

passage of time.” In doing so, just like his use of the tableau, he opens the image to another dimension, allowing time to bifurcate. He asks that it not simply be taken literally, but that we observe the film with an allegorical eye. The moon, therefore, becomes something other than a symbol of lunacy.

In the opening scenes of the film, Carole Schneider is presented as a woman who continually thinks and feels. Her image is continually followed by her voice-over hectically speaking her disjointed thoughts. Her gestures are similarly hectic and disjointed, and they are starkly contrasted with the controlled, ordered and unmoving gestures of her boyfriend, Alexander (Mostéfa Djadjam). Carole desperately wants Alexander to notice her, to be moved by her, but they clearly occupy different worlds, or rather different regions of the world. Carole even tries to suppress her urges: “I must not dream, I must not dream”, she repeats to herself over and over. Carole’s gestures are further contrasted with those of the mental asylum to which she will soon be sent. Schroeter intercuts the opening scenes of Carole attempting to engage with Alexander with images of the asylum, where the inmates play out their various roles in a highly ostentatious and theatrical manner, some even adopting the personas of fictional theatrical characters. Even the doctors and nurses cannot be entirely differentiated from the inmates. Once she is in the asylum, it becomes clear that her affliction is not simply the result of a mental disorder, but that she represents a way of engaging with the world that cannot be contained by the institutions of society. Indeed, Schroeter makes us aware of the thin walls that separate the sane from the insane, the outside from the inside when, towards the end of the film, the walls of the set that was the asylum collapse. They were only artificial divisions, a movie set. Carole escapes the institution as it collapses, but there is nowhere for her to run as there is no longer an ‘inside’ from which to escape, all is part of the ongoing catastrophe. In order to bring this movement to a halt, she must cross against the stream, and she does so at an intersection. She crosses against the flow of the oncoming traffic, and with her entire body brings the flow to a halt.⁹⁹ It is thus as corpse, as a scarred, ruined, dispersed and mortal body that Schroeter finally prepares her for emblematic purposes. She becomes a martyr to the cause of momentarily bringing the ongoing catastrophe to a standstill.

As I have attempted to show in this chapter, through various modes of gestural performance, Schroeter is able to open up various allegorical layers of meaning in his films. He creates allegorical figures who are capable of extracting an ‘image’ from the cliché, thus deconstructing the illusory wholeness to which stereotypes belong. Gestures, also, as I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, are capable of the allegorical task of revealing and sustaining diverse temporalities and in doing so they inflect Schroeter’s cinema with what might be called an ‘allegorical Gestus’. It is, therefore, to this concept that I shall now turn.

Notes

1. Wilfried Wiegand, “Sinnlose Rituale: Filme von Werner Schroeter in Frankfurt”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, (22 November, 1969)
2. The three performers only appear together in one other film, *Virginia’s Death* also made in 1968.

3. Schroeter has said of culture, "these are the materials I play with." See, Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 48.
4. *Cinema 2*, 193. Deleuze says this of the characters in Cassavetes' films.
5. *Cinema 1*, 209-211.
6. Stephen Heath, "Repetition Time: Notes around 'Structural/materialist Film'", *Questions of Cinema*, 171.
7. This last gesture of Belmondo is preceded by another gestural quotation taken from within the film itself: he imitates Jean Seberg's facial exercises. Seberg replies to his quotation in the very last gesture of the film by imitating Belmondo's gesture of brushing his thumb across his lips, a gesture that he in turn had borrowed from Bogart.
8. Roberta E. Pearson, *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Pearson uses the term "verisimilar" in preference to such "value-laden" terms such as "melodramatic", "realistic" and "naturalistic", 20.
9. The term "limited lexicon" is Pearson's. *Ibid.*, 23-24.
10. Roland Barthes, "Cy Twombly: Works on Paper," *Responsibility of Forms* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
11. *Ibid.*, 160.
12. *Cinema 2*, 68-98.
13. Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice", in *Image-Music-Text*.
14. In fact Schroeter cites Barthes at the beginning of his film *Poussières d'amour* where he asks the question of how singers find expression in their voices: "What, then, is this body which sings the *lied*? What is it that, in my body, sings the *lied* to me listening?" Roland Barthes. "The Romantic Song", *The Responsibility of Forms* 288.
15. Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice", 182.
16. Julia Kristeva, "Revolution in Poetic Language", in Toril Moi ed. *The Kristeva Reader*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 121.
17. Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice", 182.
18. *Ibid.*, 188.
19. Giorgio Agamben, "Notes on Gesture," in *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, trans., Liz Heron (New York: Verso, 1993), 135. For an excellent discussion of gestural crisis in the cinema of John Cassavetes through Benjamin's work on modernity and Kafka, see Jodi Brooks, "Crisis and the Everyday: Some Thoughts on Gesture and Crisis in Cassavetes and Benjamin" in *Falling For You*, Stern & Kouvaros eds., 73-103. I am grateful to this essay for first introducing me to Agamben's "Notes on Gesture". Brooks begins with Deleuze's reading of Cassavetes through Comolli, but pushes beyond Deleuze's general observation that Cassavetes puts "time into the body" by discussing the specific nature of this time as "abrasive and marked by interruption" and signified by the state of crisis which the gestural circuit undergoes in and between the bodies of Cassavetes characters/actors.
20. Agamben, 136.
21. *Ibid.*, 137.
22. *Ibid.* Of course Agamben is not suggesting that Tourette's Syndrome ceased to exist, but that it became hidden amongst a gestural crisis which had beset the general population.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Pearson, *Eloquent Gestures*.
25. In "Central Park", 48, Benjamin wrote, "One encounters in Baudelaire a profusion of stereotypes, as one does in the poets of the Baroque."
26. Benjamin quoting Birken, *OGTD*, 195. Emblems consist of two elements: image and word. It is the task of the emblemist to bring the two together through a form of montage. Benjamin writes: "The emblemist does not present the essence implicitly, 'behind the image'. He drags the essence of what is depicted out before the image, in writing, as caption." *OGTD*, 185.

27. The ageing body is also an important figure for Schroeter but I will turn to this figure through my discussion of the Japanese butoh performer Kazuo Ohno and the ageing divas of *Poussières d'amour* in chapter 6.
28. This figure is the site intense homoeroticism in Schroeter's films and forms a link with the traditions of gay film-making of the New York Underground, some of whose work Schroeter would have seen at the 1967 Knokke experimental film festival. Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini also shares with Schroeter a tendency toward the homoeroticisation of the figure of Christ. I will deal with this figure briefly under the more general heading of the Martyr.
29. Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason*, trans., Patrick Camiller (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 93.
30. *Ibid.*, 94.
31. These films include, *Rezitativ und Arie der Elvira aus Ernani 1844 von Guiseppe Verdi* (1968), *Mona Lisa* (1968), *Maria Callas Porträt* (1968), *Callas Text mit Doppelbeleuchtung* (1968), and *Callas Walking Lucia* (1968). Unfortunately, I have been unable to view these films myself, which Schroeter describes as "private films" intended for viewing only by himself and a few close friends. See Bronnen & Brocher, 160. I have relied on Sebastian Feldmann's account of them in *Werner Schroeter*, Jansen & Schütte, eds., 86-93.
32. Feldmann, *Werner Schroeter*, Jansen & Schütte, eds., 89-90.
33. *Ibid.*, 90.
34. *Ibid.*, 90-91.
35. *Ibid.*, 91.
36. *Ibid.*
37. It should be noted, however, that Schroeter has conceived of his more recent film *Poussières d'amour* with Callas in mind, and she was to have been the central figure in this film. Conversation with Schroeter, Berlin (14 April 2005). Notably, Callas appears in Pasolini's film in a role which she had sung many times, but her role in the film is a dramatic role and did not call for her famous singing voice, which by then had all but deteriorated. In his biography of Callas, Michael Scott writes that in the 1960s Callas had "made only as many operatic appearances in a decade as she had made in just one year in the early 1950s." This decline in performances he puts down to her increasing schedule of commercial recordings. Michael Scott, *Maria Meneghini Callas* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 122. Equally, too, however, her voice was in the process of decline.
38. Indeed, his acknowledgment of the inevitable effects of time, and his allegorical attempt to rescue her image for all eternity is expressed literally in the obituary he wrote for her entitled "Der Herztod der Primadonna", *Der Spiegel* n. 40 (1977).
39. Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994). See especially chapter 4 "The Callas Cult", 134-153.
40. See Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" *Sigmund Freud. The Standard Edition*, trans., James Strachey, vol XIV, 1914-1916, (London: Hogarth Press, 1986). Freud says that in mourning, the subject grieves the loss of a conscious object, whereas in melancholia the subject does not know, or cannot remember what has been lost, "it is an object loss withdrawn from consciousness" (245). Freud's distinction, therefore, can be applied to Schroeter's loss of Callas, not so much as an object "withdrawn from consciousness", but an object that was never possessed by him as such and therefore not a true object of mourning, but of melancholy recollection. The distinction, in as far as a kind of forgetting is implied in melancholia, is pertinent to the distinction between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' recollection, the latter of which, as I have been arguing, is the mode of memory most appropriate to allegory.
41. Koestenbaum, 136. Koestenbaum's mention of Callas giving the "effect of nature" further marks her as an allegorical image. The "effect of nature" is manufactured, a sign of her commodity form, and thus in her, as in allegory, nature and history (as a construct) merge.

42. I feel the need to mark the unashamedly fake quality of the blood, as Schroeter never attempts to produce what Deleuze calls a "truthful" or "falsifying" narration, but enthusiastically relishes in the "powers of the false", a power which opera very much also plays with. As Godard says "it isn't blood, it's some red." Cited in Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 22.
43. Werner Schroeter, in Schmid & Scuria 21-22.
44. *Cinema 2*, 48.
45. Feldmann, "Kommentierte Filmografie," Werner Schroeter, Jansen & Schütte, eds., 125.
46. Schroeter, in Schmid & Scuria, 22. This synopsis was written after the film. In it Schroeter narrates some of the stories that occur not in the images of the films, but rather *between* them. In one of my favourite embellishments, Schroeter describes what appears in the film as an image of the Victor Emmanuel Monument in Rome, shot at night and accompanied by Strauss' "Blue Danube" waltz on the soundtrack. He writes: "Inside her [a noblewoman mentioned earlier] dark palace the Venusians are holding an orgy, we cannot see them, but we dare to listen to their music; Waltzes from Vienna." 22. It is through the activation of one's powers of 'phantasy' and cultural knowledge of such stories as the Marquis de Sade's *120 Days of Sodom* and its cinematic evocation in such films as Luis Buñuel's *L'age D'or* (1930) and Pasolini's *Salo* (1975) that such stories may arise in the mind of the spectator.
47. In his exposé for the film Schroeter writes: "Most of the time she is adorned with jewels. She wears her dresses only once and then has them sold at a fleamarket." Unpublished exposé "Intramuros: Zwischen Mauern. Ein Film von Werner Schroeter", from ZDF archives. The subtitle Schroeter gives to this exposé, "The truth of poetry, the comedy of reality", is telling of the attitude he adopts toward Imelda Marcos in the film. Schroeter also told me how he scuffled with Marcos' tight security while filming this scene. He recalls this as a very comic moment, running toward her with his camera, filming for a only a short time before being dragged away by security. Conversation with Schroeter (14 April 2005).
48. Karsten Witte, "Visual Pleasure Inhibited: Aspects of the German Revue Film," *New German Critique*, n. 24/25 (fall/winter, 1981-82), 238. 239.
49. *Ibid.*, 239.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, 240.
52. Of this film Feldmann writes: "*Der Bomberpilot* is Schroeter's most neglected film, or at least the one least mentioned film from Schroeter's lengthy association with ZDF's Das kleine Fernsehspiel department. The main reason that this film is so often overlooked may be that Schroeter cannot be trusted to deal with contemporary subjects...*Der Bomberpilot* is certainly not one of his master works." Werner Schroeter, Jansen & Schütte eds., 132.
53. Benjamin, "Conversations with Brecht," *Understanding Brecht*, (London: NLB Verso, 1973), 115. Translation modified.
54. Like Fassbinder, when Schroeter began making films he built around him a tight company of actors including Magdalena Montezuma, Carla Aulaulu, Steven Adamczewski, Rita Bauer, Knut Koch, Gisela Trowe, Rosa von Praunheim, Mascha Elm, Ellen Umlauf, Ingrid Caven and, more recently, Isabelle Huppert, most of whom had already gained experience in experimental theatre and film, and many of whom continued to work with him in film and theatre. Only later, such as in his 'Italian' films *Regno di Napoli* and *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*, did he employ a mixture of professional and amateur or non-actors in his films.
55. *Cinema 1*, 209-211.
56. Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Space*, 97.
57. As we shall see below with reference to Schroeter's prostitutes, Benjamin names the prostitute, replacing the corpse of the baroque, as the allegorical figure of modernity par excellence.
58. *Cinema 1*, 210.
59. *Ibid.*, 210-211.

60. "Central Park", 46. This image always reminds me of the woman in Chantal Akerman's film *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai de Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), a film in which we watch the orderly daily routine of a housewife who practices prostitution in the afternoons. For a time housewife and prostitute seem to be able to coexist comfortably, neither one managing to upset the routine of the other. Some way into the film, however, after rhythms and routines have been established for the viewer, the comfortable coexistence become disjointed and her household routine begins to give way: she forgets to put the lid on the china pot, burns the potatoes, and forgets to put the scissors away. This forgetfulness in her routine ultimately results in her killing her client: she kills him with the scissors that she has forgotten to put away. In a sense, he is killed by the slippage in her routine, he is killed with the scissors just because they were there. The prostitute does not know what to do with such household implements, so she kills; they become the bloody apparatus of destruction. Although the films of Akerman are far removed in many respects from those of Schroeter, an affinity exists between them in the way they both foreground the importance of gesture. Both have also made films of the German dancer Pina Bausch and her company, the Wuppertal Tanztheater, who I will discuss in the next chapter.
61. Vittoria = 'Victory', Massimo = 'The Great', Pagano = 'Pagan'. The monumentality of the names are somewhat ironic given the fact that the film is set in a particularly poor sector of Naples.
62. "Central Park", 52-53.
63. OGTD, 217.
64. Ibid., 152. Benjamin writes: "bad dreams come from the spleen, but prophetic dreams are also the prerogative of the melancholic. As the common lot of princes and martyrs they are the familiar element in the *Traverspiel*."
65. Although this is not a traditional attribute of Saint Sebastian, I believe Schroeter uses this device to liken his suffering to that of Christ, the original Christian martyr.
66. The title of the film, *Kingdom of Naples*, also refers to much deeper strata of history. Naples, the basition of the Bourbon empire, was the last kingdom to become part of a united Italy, finally being conquered by Giuseppe Garibaldi and his army in 1861. As Sebastian Feldmann has commented of the film: "the crown no longer has power over the people but the misery of the poor has altered little since the time of the kingdom...In place of the throne and the altar lie the political parties. The plight of the poor, however, remain the same." Werner Schroeter, 177.
67. Werner Schroeter, "English Synopsis" in Schmid & Scuria, 23.
68. *Leidenschaft* is the equivalent of the English 'passion'. In German, the 'Passion of Christ' is referred to as '*das Leiden Christi*', with '*leiden*' meaning 'to suffer' or 'to be afflicted' by something and evoking the various tortures which prepared Christ's body for martyrdom. Schroeter often uses the term to signify that passion (as an emotional engagement with something) is inseparable from suffering. *Leidenschaft* appears to be the fate of most of Schroeter's figures of male homosexuality.
69. Schroeter uses a very simple tableau composition for this father-son discussion. It consists of father and son seated at a table facing one another. In fact, Schroeter uses very a similar composition whenever a scene involves a father-son confrontation. Such scenes occur also in *Regno di Napoli*, *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*, and *Der lachende Stern*.
70. For a discussion of the Christian imagery in this film see Richard Dyer, *Now you see it: Studies on lesbian and gay film*", (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 120-125.
71. Rosa von, Praunheim, "Mit herzlichen Gruß an Champagner Schroeter," *Filmkritik*, v. 23 n. 1 (1979). von Praunheim criticized Schroeter for not taking a more active political stand in his films regarding homosexual rights.
72. Schroeter is likely to have seen films by such directors as Kenneth Anger and Jack Smith at the experimental film festival which he attended in Knokke, Belgium, in 1967.

73. Dyer, *Now you see it*, 123.
74. Robert Duncan cited by Dyer, *ibid.*, 105-6.
75. *Ibid.*, 107.
76. *Ibid.*, 110.
77. Benjamin, "Central Park", 47.
78. Dyer, *Now you see it*, 123.
79. *Ibid.*
80. As Dyer also points out, in Freudian psychoanalysis, homosexuality is also considered a result of maternal domination. *Ibid.*, 107. The mother/son relationship in *Der Rosenkönig* would certainly fit this psychoanalytic schema.
81. These associations range from the tableau compositions of the barn where Fernando is detained (although he remains bound to a chair, he remains of his own free will), which evokes images of the manger where Christ was born, to the small prayer book from which Fernando reads. Albert comes to tend to Fernando's needs, cleansing and feeding him, and at one point they share bread and wine, recalling the holy sacrament of the Eucharist. Roses, either white or red, are also closely associated with various religious figures including various martyrs. Roses are said to have sprouted where the blood of St Francis of Assisi dropped upon the ground. A rose without thorns is associated with the Virgin.
82. Benjamin wrote: "it is by virtue of a strange combination of nature and history that the allegorical mode of expression is born." *OGTD*, 167.
83. *OGTD*, 179.
84. *Ibid.*, 166.
85. Werner Schroeter "16 Internationales Forum des jungen Films", (36. internationale Filmfestspiel Berlin, 1986), np.
86. Pier Paolo Pasolini quoted by Sam Rohdie in *The Passion of Pier Paolo Pasolini* (London: BFI, 1995), 68.
87. *Ibid.*
88. Dixon, Laurinda S. *Perilous Chastity*, 197.
89. *Ibid.*, 198.
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*, 206.
92. *Ibid.*, 212.
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*, 220.
95. Ulrike Sieglöhr, "Excess and Yearning: The Operatic in Werner Schroeter's Cinema", in Jeremy Tambling, ed., *A Night in at the Opera: Media Representations of Opera* (London: John Libbey & The Arts Council of England, 1994), 215. Sieglöhr's definition of melodrama derives mainly from Peter Brooks' *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and the Mode of Excess* rather than from its analysis in film theory.
96. Corrigan, "Schroeter's *Willow Springs* and the Excesses of History", 173.
97. I am referring to the German version of the film, although I believe the French version was also dubbed.
98. *OGTD*, 135.
99. I shall discuss another instance of Carole moving against the grain of society in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Brecht and Beyond: From Social to Allegorical Gestus

The theory and practice of Bertolt Brecht has had a decisive and far ranging impact upon both the practice and theory of film throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Indeed Brecht saw the radical potential of the film medium to work at revealing and altering the mechanisms that lay behind existing social conditions much earlier in the century. He was enthusiastic to put this potential into practice, but perhaps due to his underestimation of the strengths of those mechanisms, many of his attempts ended in compromise or, in his eyes, even failure.¹ But despite Brecht's own faltering attempts to import his theories of epic theatre into film, many film-makers and film theorists have turned to Brecht in order, on a practical level, to mobilize film as a form of social critique, or on a theoretical level, to envision a radical new form of political cinema.

In his article "From anti-illusionism to hyper-realism: Bertolt Brecht and contemporary film",² Thomas Elsaesser succinctly summarizes many of the direct and indirect influences that Brecht had on both film-making and film theory during the second half of the twentieth century. Elsaesser points out that in Europe since the late 1960s, many directors, especially those from Italy, France and Germany, have put certain aspects of Brecht's theories into practice in many different ways. This ranged from the rather more general "new dramatization of history" favoured by Italian directors such as Visconti or Bertolucci, to the much more specific quotations and transpositions of Brecht's texts by Jean Luc Godard in France or by Jean Marie Straub and Danielle Huillet.³ But Brecht's influence on the New German Cinema was perhaps most evident in the fight led by film-makers and intellectuals alike, to bring to life a new cinema by changing the modes of production while engaging in practice, much in the same way that Brecht had believed in the possibility of changing the social function of theatre through the production of plays.⁴ As such, it was more Brecht's desire to intervene in and alter the means and form of cultural production and consumption that inspired West German film-makers than his "value for film theory" as such.⁵ These film-makers, with the exception of some feminist film-makers mostly worked outside of the dominant discourses in film theory.⁶

Brecht was, however, taken up very seriously and extensively by film theory in Britain during the 1970s.⁷ There, particularly in the pages of the journal *Screen*, Brecht's theories were pushed into the service of theorizing a form of radical political cinema, which found its ideal fulfilment in the stridently anti-illusionist, non-narrative films of the structural/materialists, but also provided a way of reading films that were already acknowledged to be inspired or influenced by Brecht. Ironically, it was often these latter films that explicitly acknowledged a debt to Brecht, such as Godard's *Tout va bien* (1971-72) that were judged to be "politically weak"⁸ when considered within the frame of reference that arises out of a particular historically, socially and politically specific reading of Brecht.⁹

The aspects of Brecht's work that most interested such writers as Colin McCabe, Stephen Heath and Martin Walsh were those that actively engaged in a critique of, and suggested an alternative to, the cultural products of modern capitalist society. For them, Brecht offered a way of thinking and developing a 'political cinema' that could take, as Elsaesser notes, "the form of a 'materialist' film aesthetics." Elsaesser explains that writers in "the journal *Screen* argued for a return to Brecht and his theses of non-linearity and anti-illusionism, of spectatorial distancing, and epic modes of narration."¹⁰ These formal strategies, pivoting around Brecht's notion of the *Verfremdungseffekt* or 'distancing',¹¹ were designed not only to place the spectator into a more active position in regard to the film, but also to reveal and enable a critique of the mechanisms by which classical narrative cinema places the spectator in a fixed and passive position. Such cinematic concerns were paired with political concerns, such as representing the struggles of the working classes and revealing to them the contradictions of their place in society, as cogs in the chain of production; consumers of those products, but never actually in possession of the means of production themselves.

Although they managed very successfully to bring elements of Brecht's politics to screen studies, what the *Screen* writers seem most unable to account for fully, however, are Brecht's aesthetics – of which his strategies of anti-illusionism, interruption and epic narration form an integral part – and, above all, the possibility of pleasure in the cinema. In fact, at this time, truly political films seem to be predicated by a certain kind of displeasure in the viewing experience. Writing on the films of Straub and Huillet, for example, Martin Walsh says that "the viewer is forced to work at the production of meaning",¹² which, with its evocation of the notion of work, seems to preclude entirely the possibility of pleasure. In fact it becomes evident in Brecht's "Short Organum for the Theatre" that he would never entirely preclude the possibility that a progressive and socially conscious form of theatre, such as the epic theatre, could entertain at the same time as it educates its audience.¹³

In its commitment to a certain politicization of film studies, Anglo 1970s film theory addresses Brecht's work only on a very general level. To use a particularly cinematic metaphor, Brecht is viewed in long shot rather than in close-up. His work provides the establishing shot which is then cut up according to a logic determined by a fixed political position; ironically, a somewhat 'classical' procedure.

In the following few pages, I wish to conduct a re-reading of a few specific details of Brecht's work pivoting around his notion of *Gestus*, and in doing so, I hope not only to move beyond the Brecht that was claimed for film theory during the 1970s, but to show how, when brought into contact with the allegorical cinema of Werner Schroeter, along with Gilles Deleuze's notion of the time-image, his work may be used productively in order to generate new ways of thinking about film.

Re-framing Brecht

Much work has been done in recent years in just such an effort to 're-read' Brecht.¹⁴ Like the resurgence of interest in Benjamin's notion of allegory, Brecht's work has been brought to bear on many of the discourses surrounding the term 'postmodernism'. It is significant that both should become objects of renewed intellectual interest in the late twentieth century. Indeed, Walter Benjamin's rather idiosyncratic understanding of Brecht, and in particular Brecht's notion of *Gestus*, can be seen as yet a further aspect of Benjamin's work that implicitly brings his work on allegory to bear upon certain phenomena of the early twentieth century. Benjamin even goes so far as to trace a sort of rough tradition for Brecht, which he describes as a stalking track "along which the legacy of medieval and baroque drama has crept down to us over the sublime but barren massif of classicism." "This track," continues Benjamin, "reappears today, rough and untended as it may be, in the plays of Brecht."¹⁵ Furthermore, Benjamin aligns Brecht's techniques of interruption in his Epic theatre to certain processes of mechanical reproduction such as the printing press. The emphasis Benjamin places upon the technique of montage in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" is present also in his writings on Brecht, and in particular, in his discussions of *Gestus*. For Benjamin it is the principle of interruption that is one of the most important aspects of Epic theatre and it is through the notion of interruption that he aligns Epic theatre with film. Benjamin writes that "Epic theatre proceeds in fits and starts, in a manner comparable to the images on a film strip."¹⁶ Although he does not mention montage explicitly in either version of "What is Epic Theatre", he writes of the ability in Epic theatre for "separate" and "sharply distinct situations" to have a "forceful impact on one another", and of the tendency for the resulting "intervals" to "destroy illusion".¹⁷ In "The Author as Producer", he states this more explicitly:

the epic theatre adopts a technique which has become familiar to you in recent years through film and radio, photography and the press. I speak of the technique of montage, for montage interrupts the context into which it is inserted.¹⁸

In his discussions of Epic theatre, Benjamin privileges the destructive, allegorizing tendencies of film and the techniques of montage. In doing so, he is able to align his own suggestions that certain kinds of films may allow the spectator to adopt a critical attitude in the cinema with Brecht's aims to "represent conditions" rather than "develop actions" and to engage the spectator's critical faculties by inhibiting "the audience's readiness for empathy" through the use of, among other techniques, the *Verfremdungseffekt*.¹⁹

One of the aspects of Brecht's theories of Epic theatre that most interests Benjamin is the use of gesture. Characteristically, Benjamin focuses upon the processes of interruption and fragmentation that are achieved through the use of gesture in the Epic theatre. "'To make gestures quotable'," writes Benjamin, "is the [Epic] actor's most important achievement."²⁰ Curiously, however, Benjamin does not attempt to interpret Brecht's notion of *Gestus*, but rather treats it as a self-evident term.²¹ The notion of *Gestus* is in fact much more complex than Benjamin, and indeed other readers of Brecht, seem to acknowledge.

Nowhere in his writings does Brecht undertake a detailed exegesis of his notion of *Gestus*,²² but it is given its clearest definition in a short article entitled "On Gestic Music".²³ Brecht writes: "Gest is not supposed to mean gesticulation: it is not a matter of explanatory or emphatic movements of the hands, but of overall attitudes. A language is gestic when it is grounded in a gest and conveys particular attitudes adopted by the speaker towards other men."²⁴ Gest and its adjectival form gestic do not, therefore, refer to individual gestures as such but rather describe the underlying attitude of a play, a song, a piece of music, or indeed any text, action or gesture. As John Willett has written, a gest is "at once gesture and gist, attitude and point: one aspect of the relation between two people, studied singly, cut to essentials and physically or verbally expressed."²⁵

There are all kinds of gest, but for Brecht the most important one is social. The social gest involves the gesture of pointing to the social relations between an action or event and its meaning in a particular context. As Brecht explains: "One's efforts to keep one's balance on a slippery surface result in a social gest as soon as falling down would mean 'losing face'; in other words, losing one's market value."²⁶ The Epic theatre was committed to making visible the social gest, uncovering the conditions through which certain actions enter into social relations and acquire social meanings. In his 1939 essay "On Rhymeless Verse and Irregular Rhythms", Brecht explains various ways in which the social gest might be delivered by an actor in the theatre. He writes of preferring the roughness and unevenness of the "almost unreadable 'stumbling' ['holprigen'] verses of the old Schlegel and Tieck Shakespeare translation" of *Edward II* to "Rothe's smooth new one." The difficult language and syncopated rhythm imbued the actor's delivery with "greater force", and enabled the delivery of a speech to mimetically represent its content.²⁷ Brecht gives the example of rewriting a speech so that when spoken it would resemble the faltering breath of a man running. Such a strategy turns an act of speaking into an act of showing "the speaker's conflicting feelings".²⁸

It is the gest that inserts a distance and difference between an actor and her or his character. As Brecht writes in his "Short Organum for the Theatre", "at no moment must [the actor] go so far as to be wholly transformed into the character played." The result being "that the actor appears on the stage in a double role."²⁹ The actor shows her or himself in the process of portraying a character rather than simply assimilating that character. The gest is therefore instrumental in bringing about the *Verfremdungseffekt*, it arises out of but also constitutes a kind of distancing, a distance

which is then mirrored in the relation between the spectator and the play. A gest cannot, therefore, be presented by a single gesture, but rather it emerges out of the space between two gestures: the gest is a mode of linkage, but a mode of linkage that makes visible a gap or a contradiction.³⁰ The gest does not function like organic montage by smoothing over the gap, but works rather more like allegorical montage, like the irrational cut where the gap is of primary importance. A social gest as conceived by Brecht, therefore, presented a way of delivering his political message to the spectator, a message in which Brecht asks his viewer to adopt a critical attitude in order to perceive the contradictions of her or his own situation. Brecht writes, "the social gest is the gest relevant to society, the gest that allows conclusions to be drawn about the social circumstances."³¹

In chapter three, I already mentioned one example from Schroeter's films where he employs such a social gest. This is the moment in *Regno di Napoli* where Mrs Cavioli 'tableaus' an entire sequence by placing a hold on the gesture of grasping the sack of flour, exchanged for her daughter's virginity. The actor effectively interrupts her character's place in the context of the story in order to reveal the contradictions of the situation. This is a classic example of a Brechtian gest. The pause of the camera on her pose further contributes to the gest, allowing time for the gest to sink in or to develop in the way a photograph develops. The film is left no other alternative than to cut at that point, for a return to the diegetic movement of the story is no longer possible. A similar social gest is achieved in *Regno di Napoli*, when Vittoria brings home a wall hanging and small plaster bust of President Kennedy to replace her brother Massimo's worn old communist party poster. She justifies this contribution to the household decor because it is she, rather than her brother or father, who pays the bills. In a repetition of Mrs Cavioli's paused gesture in the earlier scene, Vittoria rests her hand on the bust, holding her pose for several moments and looking directly toward the camera. Vittoria's gesture effectively figures, within the private domain of the home, the changes occurring in the public sphere: the growing allegiances between Italy and the United States in the 1960s. The social gest lies in the fact that this is very much only a symbolic change: the change from one ideology to another, but that the shift towards capitalism is not as simple or uncomplicated as replacing one poster with another.

There are further instances that could be described as social gests in several of Schroeter's films, including, *Der lachende Stern*, *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* and *Der Bomberpilot*. Some are tinged with a ludic gest such as, for example, the moment in *Der Bomberpilot* in which the three ex-Nazi revue showgirls begin to believe in the benefits of racial integration "after sharing a joint of marijuana over breakfast." Where such a social gest is accomplished, however, these are really only isolated examples in films which deal in much more diffuse ways with socio-political subjects. Therefore, it would be wrong to suggest that Schroeter is a Brechtian film-maker, or that the overriding intention of his films is to reveal the social gest of a particular situation. Usually, the gests that we encounter in Schroeter's cinema are much more complicated, even to the extent that opposing or contradictory gests may be presented simultaneously. We find a potent example of this in *Deux*, where

'Magdalena' composes two letters to the former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. In one letter, she appeals to Arafat writing "to hell with Israel, you must conquer Jerusalem. It belongs to the Palestinians. There is only one solution. Bomb it!" But in a second letter, she appeals to him to work at the peace process, to "stop inciting violence...seize all illegal arms...renew good faith on both sides...Renounce the territories...make peace the object of all your sympathies. Then it will surround you." The social gest is further reinforced in the scene where we see a huge video screen in a park in Paris. We see the image of Christiane Ensslin, the sister of the RAF terrorist Gudrun Ensslin, repeating the words "Violence begins at birth. Our mothers bring us into a world of violence." As if to confirm this, one of the twins is viciously attacked right in front of this image, creating a visible social gest from Ensslin's words. In most cases, Schroeter's aims certainly do not coincide with those of Brecht, but, in his writings Brecht did acknowledge the possibility of producing other kinds of gest.

Although for Brecht, revealing the social gest of a situation or action was the aim of Epic theatre, he does not preclude the possibility of other kinds of gest. When he writes that "not all gests are social gests",³² he does not offer a whole range of alternatives, but he does invite the 'post-Brechtian' reader to consider other kinds of gest and the range of different kinds of messages that they might deliver.

It is just such an invitation that Gilles Deleuze takes up briefly in *Cinema 2*.³³ In chapter eight, "Cinema, body and brain, thought," Deleuze writes, "for [Brecht] the gest should be social, although he recognises that there are other kinds of gest."³⁴ It is primarily these other kinds of gest that interest Deleuze. He mentions a number of alternative gests including a musical gest, a ceremonial gest, an everyday gest, a theatrical gest, a pictorial gest, a burlesque gest, even "pornographic postures", which could be thought of as a kind of gest, as well as a "gest neither real nor imaginary but on the border between the two."³⁵ This latter would be something like a crystalline gest, dissolving the distinctions between true and false. This is not to say that Deleuze discounts or discredits the importance of a social or political gest, indeed he is acutely attuned to the possibilities of political cinema.³⁶ However, in contrast to the proponents of 1970s film theory who were only concerned with the social or political gest, Deleuze is interested in the intricate "knot" of attitudes and postures that are generated in the process of revealing or developing the social (or indeed any kind of) gest.³⁷ These "knots" of attitudes and postures generate a multitude of gests, some of which may contribute to the creation of an overall social gest, or may even be counterproductive to that cause.

With the importance placed by film theorists of the 1970s on the political function of the social gest derived from Brecht's writings rather than his practice, the gest inevitably becomes somewhat removed from the body. Furthermore, its connection to gesture, from which the term *Gestus* derives linguistically, becomes lost. One of Deleuze's achievements is to return the gest to the domain of the body, from where it initially emanated: from the body, speech, postures and gestures of the Epic actor. For Deleuze, the gest reveals or develops the temporalities of bodies in the cinema. Through the notion of gest, Deleuze recasts the relationship between theatre and

cinema, a relationship, which is developed in a very intricate way in the films of Werner Schroeter, and depends on what Deleuze calls a direct “theatricalization” of the body.³⁸

Writing of the cinema of John Cassavetes, Deleuze puts forth a general definition of gest. He writes:

What we call gest in general is the link or knot of attitudes between themselves, their co-ordination with each other, in so far as they do not depend on a previous story, a preexisting plot or an action-image. On the contrary, the gest is the development of attitudes themselves, and as such, carries out a direct theatricalization of bodies, often very discreet, because it takes place independently of any role.³⁹

In Schroeter’s cinema, as in Brecht’s theatre, the actors do not fully assimilate into their roles. The actors often seem to be haunted by their characters: both seeming to hover between a state of dream and consciousness. But further to this, Schroeter’s cinema involves exactly the kind of theatricalization of bodies described by Deleuze, where the body itself becomes a stage, a site of performance: it doesn’t matter where Maria Malibran dies, she must simply die in performance! In the first instance, this is what enables Schroeter to turn almost any space into a performance space, where the body of the performer draws the scene into a conceptual frame through its attitudes and its gestures. This is the source of the theatrical or operatic gest that lies at the heart of Schroeter’s cinema, but, as I discussed in my last chapter with reference to the various allegorical figures who populate his films, this gest is itself always marked by certain interferences: memory lapses, faults of performance, misquotations, separation of the image and soundtracks, or is syncopated through the use of a kind of gestural shorthand which does away with the distinction between ‘histrionic’ and ‘naturalistic’ modes of performance, but rather plays with the powers of the false. Therefore, even within the relatively realist narrative of the first part of *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*, bodies have the power to ‘tableau’ entire edited sequences, effectively opening up distinct spatio-temporal regions containing multiple temporalities that may be read allegorically.

It is in the ability to “put time into the body” where Deleuze’s definition of gest intersects with but also goes beyond Brecht’s conception of the term in several ways. Not only, as in Brecht, is the gest independent of role – that is, an actor does not strive to become a character, but for Deleuze, the gest is similarly independent of story, plot, or what he calls “action-image”. Benjamin, as I have already noted above, has discussed how it was not the aim of Epic theatre to “develop actions” but rather works to interrupt the forward movement of action.⁴⁰ Similarly, Deleuze’s term ‘action-image’ is significant to his understanding of gest in that he here posits the gest as one of the many factors that signal the “crisis of the movement-image” and the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema.

Moving away from Brecht, therefore, for Deleuze, in the cinema of the time-image, the postures and attitudes, the “inhibited or incomplete gestures” of the body reveal

not social constructs as they do in Brecht, but become the developers (*révélateurs*) of time.⁴¹ They, as Deleuze says, “put time into the body”, fill the body with time, fill it with the “before and after”: in this way the body becomes “a revealer of the deadline.”⁴² These attitudes and postures do not represent actions in a chronological progression, they are not linked together in time by a narrative or a story, but are threaded loosely together by a gest: “the gest is the thread which goes from one category to another”,⁴³ but it is also that which reveals the differences between categories. The gest is both the edit and the mode of linkage.

If we return for a moment to Roland Barthes’ description of the gesture, which he said is “something like the surplus of an action...the gesture...surrounds the action with an *atmosphere*”,⁴⁴ then the temporal gest, according to Deleuze’s reformulation of Brecht’s social gest, must be something like this atmosphere. Like Barthes’ gesture, Deleuze’s gest is not sensory-motor, it is not transitive and this enables it to develop time in its pure state. In the cinema of the time-image, the gest arises out of the inability to act and react. It rises up, filled with time when the time of action has already passed.

The gest rises up in face of the crisis of the gestural sphere as it had been theorized by Giorgio Agamben.⁴⁵ The gest becomes a kind of involuntary recollection-image of action, it makes use of the ‘surplus’ of action, that non-communicative function that Roland Barthes ascribes to the gesture. This gest/gesture in Schroeter’s cinema becomes the revealer/developer of the allegorical image and its incommensurable temporalities.

Through this conception of the gest, we can begin to see the relationship between the tableau, montage and gesture in general as I have identified them as fundamental characteristics of Schroeter’s cinema. Time is what they all have in common, and they all contribute to the production of allegorical images. These allegorical images are like dialectical time-images. Indeed, Benjamin relates the gesture in Epic theatre to his notion of the dialectical image. He writes: “in Epic theatre the dialectic is not born of the contradiction between successive statements or ways of behaving, but in the gesture itself.”⁴⁶

At this point we should return to Agamben’s reading of Deleuze in his “Notes on Gesture”. Agamben writes: “Gesture rather than image is the cinematic element.”⁴⁷ Agamben begins the third section of his article with reference to Deleuze’s conception of film images as “moving pictures” in the sense that they are “neither ‘timeless postures’ (like the forms of the classical world) nor ‘static sections’ of movement, but ‘moving sections’, images which are themselves in motion.”⁴⁸ Extending Deleuze’s argument, Agamben attempts to define the “status of the image within modernity.”⁴⁹ In modernity the image, according to Agamben, has lost its “mythical fixity” and becomes “animated by an antinomial polarity.” This image, or “gesture” as Agamben prefers to call it effaces the “*imago*” or symbol which corresponds to voluntary memory, while at the same time it “maintains the *dynamis*”, which corresponds to “the image flashed in the epiphany of involuntary memory.”

Agamben continues: "And while the former dwells in magical isolation, the latter always refers beyond itself, towards a whole of which it is a part."⁵⁰ In the division he makes between the "*imago*" and "*dynamis*", Agamben seems to refer implicitly to the distinction between symbol and allegory and the fragmenting, allegorizing effects of the modern apparatuses of reproduction. In his attempt to extend Deleuze's argument, however, Agamben does not appear to go far enough, for his notion of gesture remains tied to movement, albeit stunted, fragmented, inhibited movement. Agamben writes only of "images", failing to make the distinction between movement-images and time-images. Furthermore, although he touches upon the category of memory, Agamben fails to acknowledge the crucial aspect of time. I would argue, therefore, that the cinematic element is indeed the image or, more specifically, the time-image (dialectical and allegorical) and it is this that the gesture/gest extracts from the body as from the cliché.

And so, in the remainder of this chapter, I wish to show some of the ways Schroeter's cinema works with these gestural time-images. In order to do so I wish to refer to the work of two performance artists, Pina Bausch and Kazuo Ohno, who appear in Schroeter's 1980 film *La répétition générale*. Schroeter acknowledges the importance of both these artists' work by dedicating the film to them, and through their work we are given some of the tools with which to read some of the different ways that theatricalization and temporalization of bodies is achieved in his other films.

Gestural Expropriations: Pina Bausch

The work of Pina Bausch is important to Schroeter's films on at least two levels. The first level might be called 'influential' in the sense that Bausch could be identified as an influence in Schroeter's work. On another level, it is possible to read Schroeter's use of gesture through Bausch, a reading that would rely far less upon speculation regarding supposed points of artistic influence, but rather looks to moments of correspondence and difference between the two.

Pina Bausch's Tanztheater is, as its name suggests, a practice which lies somewhere between dance and theatre. It is informed by Brechtian notions of gesture, interruption and distanciation, but it also displaces many of the political tenets upon which Brecht's Epic theatre was founded. Elizabeth Wright has called this displacement an "expropriation of Brecht", for, according to Wright, Bausch shifts Brecht's rational and political utilization of the theatre in his attempt to uncover the conditions of society and its institutions (including theatre itself) into the domain of the social, sexual and subjective body.⁵¹ Melissa McMahon has stated the difference between Bausch and Brecht most succinctly. She writes:

Pina Bausch's performance work situates itself within the Brechtian tradition, extending and transforming this tradition in so far as she does away with this residual humanism of the rational and critical subject, and displaces Brecht's preoccupation with the 'strangeness' of a socio-political context onto a foreignness of the body.⁵²

If Bausch, like Brecht, is working to uncover certain conditions, it is not so much the social and political mechanisms that is her focus. Bausch is more concerned with the effect of certain processes of socialization upon the body. As such, Bausch works less with the Brechtian notion of 'distanciation' as that which allows for a critical distance to be achieved between spectator and performance, and more with a notion of distanciation which creates a space between the body of the performer and her or his particular subjectivity. That space is then filled out (often gradually) with a seemingly arbitrary set of codes comprised of "dress, gender, music, [and] gesture."⁵³ Especially in the case of gestures, which are separated from their original social contexts and are performed in a series of repetitions and intensifications, the space often becomes so overloaded that the body, which the gesture or gestures attempt to fill out, begins to collapse under the weight.

The more gestures or 'affects' that are piled upon the body, the further the subjectivity of the performer is pushed away from the context it would normally find in that body. Although Bausch draws upon the 'real' (subjective) emotions, experiences and diverse cultural backgrounds of her troupe, these are then displaced and fragmented from the context of each individual performer, repeated and intensified. 'Real' emotions, experiences and gestures are in effect quoted and may therefore come to signify something else. In respect to Brecht, therefore, not only does Bausch make gestures quotable, but she also renders emotions and experiences quotable as well. This is the first step in the process whereby gestures may become allegorical.

Wright's emphasis upon the 'real' in Bausch's work is problematic, not only in relation to emotion but also in respect to time. Wright argues that "Bausch not only works with real emotion; she also works with real time." In order to explain what she means by "real time", Wright borrows an example from Susan Sontag; "by the time one of [Bausch's] dancers has run round the room fifty times calling out 'I'm tired,' that person is *really* tired."⁵⁴ In other words, the performer does not simply play at being tired, the performance itself brings on tiredness through duration and physical exertion. The performance must last at least as long as it takes for the performer to become tired. The term "real time" refers therefore not to fictional time, time that is artificially segmented such as through editing in the cinema or a change of scene or act in the theatre which would be time derived from movement in Deleuze's formulation. In relation to Bausch's practice, the term "real time" is not problematic in itself. Curiously, however, Wright goes on to qualify this term with the much more problematic term "subjective time." She writes, "this use of subjective time rather than historical time dissolves the normal space-time boundaries: time becomes de-reified with the result that the spectator will feel this experience in his/her own body."⁵⁵

At least two very interesting problems arise out of the above statement. The first involves the way Wright simply substitutes the term "real time" with "subjective time", and the second is the sudden shift she makes from her discussion of the experience of the dancer to that of the spectator. While the second is no less important than the first, I shall concentrate for the moment only upon the question of subjective time.

Wright's substitution of the term "real time" with "subjective time" assumes wrongly, I believe, that Bausch's performances maintain an uncomplicated relationship to subjectivity. Although Wright acknowledges that the gestures performed by Bausch and her dancers are "shaped in rehearsal" and performed in a "set form", she places more emphasis on the fact that "the dancer-cum-actors are asked to play themselves by means of improvisation" and that they "work with real, often extreme emotion, coming from real, not illusory bodies."⁵⁶ In fact, although, like Brecht, Bausch draws her gestures and emotions from what Benjamin called "the reality of today."⁵⁷ Bausch estranges them from any function they might serve in the context from which they are drawn. The same is true of the subject, as Melissa McMahon has put it so succinctly, "Bausch's work is almost a study in the shattering of narrative and subject into irreducible fragments of intense affect."⁵⁸ Bausch's work does indeed, as Wright says, "dissolve the space-time boundaries", however, in doing so it also dissolves the coordinates within which subjectivity is contextualized. McMahon writes: "The minimal unity that the body presents is disturbed by repetition and ritualisation, by the mechanisation of its movements, and by its displacement from any coherent context."⁵⁹ Thus, to a certain extent, Bausch's work reproduces the effect of reification that mechanized time inflicts upon the body in industrial society, however, Bausch pushes the mechanization of gestures to an even greater extreme by allegorizing this process. Bausch's dancers, therefore, loosen themselves from their own individual subjectivities so that they become mere bodies upon which the allegorical gestures may be inscribed. Time, or rather tempo, then becomes a factor not of the subject, but of the gesture itself.

Schroeter highlights and contributes to this process in his film *La répétition générale*. In one particular sequence from Bausch's performance piece *Café Müller*, a couple stand on stage locked tightly in an embrace. The stage is strewn with upturned tables and chairs. A third figure enters and proceeds to construct a sequence of gestures with the bodies of the two dancers. He first straightens their heads, and then the man's arms are brought upward to receive the female figure, who is then lifted into his arms. As the third performer turns and leaves, the woman falls to the ground and then rises to embrace the man as before. The third figure returns, repeats the series of gestures, only to have the woman once again fall to the ground and rise yet again to embrace the man. The series of gestures is repeated several times with the intervention of the third until the bodies finally seem to have 'learnt' the series of gestures and repeat them over and over with increasing speed until the gestures seem to self-destruct. The man and woman once again collapse into a tight embrace.

It is significant that the above sequence, effectively a 'love scene' between a couple, requires the intervention of a third figure. The couple do not perform their gestures spontaneously to begin with, but rather must 'learn' them from a third. The gestures are not outward manifestations of individual subjective experiences but are rather inscribed upon the bodies of the performers from the outside, from outside themselves. The gestures get out of hand as there is not a unifying subject to temper and contain them. The gesture takes over the body and imposes its own, gestural

time upon it. As allegories, the gestures in Bausch's performances do not in fact constitute "real time" just as they do not constitute "subjective time", but rather the time of becoming social, codified individuals in a condensed and intensified form. Wright makes a pertinent comment along these lines. She says:

The subject-matter of Bausch's work is loss or anxiety, often revealed by the dancers' enactment of childlike fears in childish games and ritual, sometimes all playing at children, sometimes playing adults and children.⁶⁰

Extending Wright's comment a little further, one could say that in many of their performances Bausch and her dancers seem to make their bodies into a blank slate, achieving an almost childlike state of innocence. From there she proceeds to add codified gestures, mirroring the processes of learning and socialization that a child will undergo, except in Bausch's dance theatre, this process inevitably happens too rapidly and repetitively for the body to withstand, causing it to eventually collapse under the weight of the gesture.

In Bausch, the gesture becomes both the 'raw material' – as it was in Brecht – but also the subject matter of her work. Bausch reveals, in a condensed and intensified form, the reifying processes through which the body passes in order to learn how to behave in society. Through the use of almost ritualistic repetition, Bausch reveals the social mechanisms through which bodies become inscribed with meaning/identity. In repeating/quoting this process in a condensed and intensified form, Bausch effectively casts an allegorical eye over the ongoing 'catastrophe' that such processes imply. For its part, Schroeter's film not only documents this aspect of Bausch's work, but intensifies it through the processes of repetition of similar images that form one aspect of his strategy of allegorical montage. Schroeter extends and delays the moment of eventual collapse by cutting back and forth to this scene throughout the film, effectively making visible the processes at work in Bausch's own practice. Although we are presented with two gestural bodies on a collision course of destruction, Schroeter cuts through this apparently linear development to effectively defer the inevitable moment of catastrophe.

We can see a similar kind of gestural temporality at work in several scenes from Schroeter's 1982 feature film *Tag der Idioten*, which could certainly be read as allusions to Bausch's work. These scenes take place in a ballroom and use gestures to depict the female protagonist Carole's refusal to integrate fully into the orderly rhythms and patterns of society. Due to the characteristically disjointed narrative created by Schroeter these sequences hover somewhere between being part of the protagonist's experiences and imaginary sequences. In fact they are fully allegorical or crystalline in that they dispel the need or the possibility of locating their exact point of departure.

We first encounter this ballroom early in the film when Carole is attempting to draw some kind of emotional response from her boyfriend, Alexander (Mostéfa Djadjam). Three times the film cuts away to a dream-like sequence shot from an extreme high



Tag der Idioten 1982. © Werner Schroeter

angle, the camera looking down into a ballroom where about twenty pairs of ballroom dancers form two lines down the centre of the room, forming a diagonal across the image which does not frame the scene squarely. Carole is situated at the centre of the image, halfway down the line of dancers, where she plays on a xylophone, accompanying a band playing a waltz. The dancers are all dressed identically, the women in white dresses and the men in black suits. They all dance simultaneously, never breaking away from their regular formation, obedient to the rhythm of the music. They move like a great cultural machine (knowing how to dance being a sign of one's status as a 'cultured' individual). Society has taught them to be identical. Here it is the rhythm of the music that serves as the third term that 'teaches' them their moves, like the third man in the segment from Bausch's *Café Müller* discussed above. Although at this point Carole appears to play a part in this cultural ritual, she mounts a silent protest by wearing the colour red, the colour Schroeter uses to signify *Leidenschaft*, passionate suffering.

In a similar scene occurring later in the film, Carole's protest is made more explicit. Carole has escaped from the mental institution where she is being held for falsely denouncing her neighbours as terrorists. This scene, which is fragmented by cutting back intermittently to the mental institution, begins with a shot into the ballroom through the panes of glass in a door. After a cutaway, the film cuts back to a reverse

shot of the initial image. The camera now observes Carole looking in through the glass whose decorative patterns fragment her face into several facets. Next time we return to the scene, Carole (again dressed in red) bursts through the doors and walks directly forward into the depth of the image calling her boyfriend's name: "Alexander...Alexander." As she does so, the dancers continue their regular, mechanical dance. Several times the lines of men and women come together, engulfing Carole and obscuring her from view. On the third occasion, as the couples part, Carole is revealed far into the depth of the shot, pulling herself along the ground. Finally, the film cuts to an extremely exaggerated low-angle shot from Carole's point of view on the ground, looking up at Alexander who is dressed in the requisite black suit. He offers her his hand, attempting to help her up, but their fingers do not grasp firmly enough and she slips away. In the next shot Carole is once again in the mental institution. In this sequence the rows of identical dancers are emblematic of a homogeneous society. Carole is unable to take up her place in the line with her lover because she refuses to conform. This refusal is marked out visually by the red of her clothing and in the way she crosses against the rigid geometry of the dance. She is emblematically going 'against the grain' of society, which is shown to be codified, ordered and based on gestural rituals in which Carole refuses to take part.

I mentioned above that these sequences were difficult to locate either diegetically or in relation to the consciousness of a particular character. It is this indeterminacy that enables an allegorical image of time to emerge. In the codified rhythm of the dancers lies the reified time of society, "homogeneous, empty time" as Benjamin might call it. As Carole descends into the depth of the image, however, she enters the non-chronological time of memory. In its deepest layer she finds her boyfriend, whom she is able to touch but only for a moment. They occupy different temporalities, different worlds. With a gesture he reaches out to pull her into his, but she slips away, destined to pursue a different course in time. Through this gesture, which could be described as a "crystalline gest", we see time as it bifurcates and splits into two dissymmetrical jets.

Kazuo Ohno

The work of the Japanese butoh performer Kazuo Ohno as he appears also in *La répétition générale* presents yet another kind of time-image and introduces us to Schroeter's fascination with the ageing body upon which time manifests itself directly. I shall begin with a brief discussion of the background of butoh for this will help us to understand more fully Ohno's importance as an allegorical figure in Schroeter's film.

In the early 1960s Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno founded the Japanese dance form known as *ankoku butoh*, which literally means "dance of darkness". According to Bonnie Sue Stein, it is "characterised by primordial, dreamlike imagery",⁶¹ and as Prue Moodie has noted, was "strongly influenced by German Expressionism."⁶² Butoh, which was founded at a time of great political and social upheaval in Japan, combines elements of traditional Japanese theatre with brutal imagery from the

recent history of Japan, such as the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Butoh sought to expose the inequities of class and wealth within a post-war society and to redefine cultural and aesthetic attitudes and values. In this respect butoh can be seen in relation to a wider artistic tendency prevalent in Japan at the time, which aimed to explore, discover and redefine what it meant to be Japanese. Like the film-maker Shohei Imamura,⁶³ whose films concentrate upon the lower classes and the lives of Japan's rural community in order to show the 'real' Japan, the Japan that lay beneath the strict and repressed culture of politeness and decorum, butoh turned to the rituals, customs and superstitions of rural Japan, but also to the increasing influence of the West. Performances often incorporate a range of musical styles from rock and roll to Japanese and western classical music. Cross-dressing is also often an important feature with its roots in the traditional Japanese dance form known as kabuki. As Bonnie Sue Stein points out however: "In kabuki, a male actor impersonates a female character, hiding in the female costume. In contrast, butoh performers may display female and male aspects of a character, personified by costume and makeup."⁶⁴

Perhaps the most striking feature of butoh performance, however, is the use of the body and its gestures. In butoh, the body becomes a site of history. "In our body, history is hidden," says Hijikata, "and will appear in each detail of our expressions. In butoh we can find and touch our hidden reality – something can be born, can appear, living and dying at the same moment."⁶⁵ In contrast to the dance theatre of Pina Bausch, which renders everyday gestures into infinitely repeatable fragments, butoh, according to Stein, develops a "language of infinitely detailed gestures."⁶⁶ Butoh is interested in the way experiences affect the body and its shape; how sensations are inscribed upon the body and reveal themselves as traces of time and memory, through the way the body is physically affected by time, especially in the way it looks and how it moves.

Ohno works with what might be called historical gestures. He does this in two ways. The first involves drawing upon sets of historically codified gestures extracted from both Japanese and western theatrical and operatic traditions. The second is the way he uses his own ageing body as a site upon which historical time has left its indelible marks. Ohno shows the marks that time has etched into his body and he uses this to his advantage in his performances. Prue Moodie has commented that rather than allowing his advancing years to become a hindrance to his performance, Ohno has turned his age into a strength. "It has become part of his technique."⁶⁷ Indeed, when he appeared in Schroeter's 1980 film *La répétition générale* he was 74 years old. His wrinkled skin has the appearance of drapery as it clings to his thin and apparently fragile frame. The operatic death sequences he performs during the film evokes the very face of death. His whitened face⁶⁸ becomes his own death mask. Ohno's gestures seem to manifest themselves out of memory, from the depths of time, rather than from the present and the presence of his performance. His body trembles as he slowly brings his hand toward his face in a gesture of despair, or cups his hands together and pushes them away from his body as though he were appealing to some invisible other; a lover perhaps. Often, something from a Puccini opera plays out on

the soundtrack.⁶⁹ Aware that his frail, old body might break, Ohno performs his gestures tentatively, often never quite forming them into complete and finished actions. As a result both the gestures, which are reminiscences of nineteenth-century opera, and his body seem almost ready to collapse: both are ruins and as such both enter into the realm of allegory.

In yet another scene featuring Kazuo Ohno in *La répétition générale* Schroeter achieves what is perhaps the most evocative image of time to be found within his entire oeuvre. In this scene, made as a collaboration between Schroeter and Ohno, the allegorical powers of the tableau, montage, the body, the gest and the gesture are brought together to present a richly layered image of incommensurable temporalities.

We should remember that in butoh the body becomes the site of a confrontation particularly appropriate to allegory: the endless struggle between the immortal soul and the mortal body. As Ohno has said of his work *Surien* (Water lilies), inspired by Monet's paintings,

Onstage I have placed this bridge over the river of life. Ghosts remove their clothes and enter the beckoning river. The eternal ghosts accompany me, always within me, surrounding my body. This is very important in dancing. Instants of time are strung together to make eternity, and in eternity there is one instant.⁷⁰

In *La répétition générale* this river becomes a Nancy canal, and the body is Ohno's, old and fragile, painted white and clothed only in a loose swathe of white fabric around his loins. The scene opens with a deep shot down the banks of a canal. On the left edge of the image we see the muddy waters of the canal, and on the right, a tall concrete wall. The bank is covered thickly with weeds and flowers, and a path has been roughly trodden out over time. The aria "O mio babbino caro" from Puccini's opera *Gianni Schicchi* plays out on the soundtrack. Ohno first appears in the depths of the image. He presses his frail body against the wall and attempts to climb it, much as a child might do. Slowly and with unsure steps he begins to move toward the camera and crosses the path. Then, lying down on the edge of the bank he playfully splashes the water with his hand. Rising and coming even closer to the camera, he slowly crouches on the bank, tucking his body into a foetal position and proceeds to pick some blades of grass. Like a very small child exploring his senses, he brings the grass, grasped tightly in his fist, toward his mouth so as to taste it. Finally, he stands and we now see the worn face of the old man, the rivers of time having etched themselves into his body. As the aria comes to an end he performs a few tentative operatic gestures, turning his gaze toward screen right before the scene cuts. Over the cut this look draws forth a memory-image in which Ohno almost meets his own gaze as he performs on stage to the same aria.

Within this allegorical tableau Ohno's body itself becomes the site of diverse temporalities: the prehensile infant, the child exploring his surroundings, and the old man once again returned to a state of limited motor capacity. Ohno's body becomes



La répétition générale 1980. © Werner Schroeter

a stratified image of time, time collected in layers of gesture-memories. As through the depths of the image itself, Ohno moves through various layers of the past. He does so not chronologically, however, but passing involuntarily from region to region. In his body, instants are woven together but we are reminded by the incessant flow of the canal (itself an allegorical image; a strange combination of nature and history) that this garment will not secure his body for eternity. Thankfully, montage interrupts at this point, *la répétition de geste* allows this body to become caught up in a new series, and he leaps into yet another region of past. The ageing performing body reveals to us the incommensurable temporalities of the allegorical gest.

In his 1996 film *Poussières d'amour*, Schroeter once again turns his attention to the ageing performing body.⁷¹ In this film, Schroeter's treatment of the ageing bodies, faces and voices of the opera divas Martha Mödl and Anita Cerquetti is particularly striking. At over eighty years of age, Mödl appears in the film as a still strong and solemn figure, but one who also shows the effects of time. For her main performance in the film, she rehearses an aria by the Belgian composer Grétry,⁷² which proceeds in several layers, fragments delicately interleaved amongst a montage of numerous different scenes. The initial scene opens with a high angle shot looking down upon the *mise en scène* that has been set up for Mödl's performance. This consists simply of a piano, which is to accompany her, and a sofa draped with a white sheet. This

shot functions as a kind of establishing shot. However, the function of this shot is not so much to establish a place, but rather it establishes the fact of the scene's own shooting. We see the various elements of the cinematic apparatus that will provide the images for the subsequent shots of Mödl's performance: the lights, the camera, the microphone suspended on a boom, and the tracks that will facilitate a tracking shot. As Mödl steps into the scene and takes her place on the sofa, she herself becomes a figure of this apparatus, an element in the *mise en scène*. The music commences, and she begins to sing. The film then cuts to a medium shot of Mödl, taken from the point of view of the camera in the establishing shot. Rather than seeing the camera, we now feel its presence as it begins to track gradually leftwards and zoom in toward Mödl at an almost imperceptible pace. We become aware of every slight inflection of Mödl's body: her gestures, her breath, her voice, her phrasing and her diction, in short, her 'grain'. The image cuts away as she continues to sing the slow repetitive phrases of the aria. When the film cuts back to her, she becomes caught up in yet another repetitive series of the song, but her body has begun to rest further back into the sofa, her body begins to give way to the pull of death evoked by the aria. The camera draws even closer to her face, upon which time has worked its force. The film then cuts away again and detours through several other performances before once again returning to Mödl. Now her head rests in an attitude of repose gently against the back of the sofa, and the song enters its final, languishing repetition. The camera draws her face into a gigantic close-up. We become aware of her age and her mortality, however, her perfectly coiffured grey hair (quite possibly a wig) lends a sculptural, eternal quality to her face, which seems to resist the effects of time. As she quietly utters the final phrase of the song, her eyes become still and unseeing, death has finally arrived. Schroeter's camera makes it possible for Mödl to perform the operatic death scene with the most minute of gestures, a situation impossible on stage. Through the repetitions of the aria, Mödl seems to evoke memories of her past career, but at the same time, each repetition draws her closer to the virtual moment of death signified by the end of the song and by her stillness and silence of her body. This effect is heightened by the slow spiral zoom of the camera, which seems to envelop her body in a form of eternal return, of the infinite repeatability of the operatic death scene. An allegorical gest emerges from her body as her past reaches out to touch the present and to forewarn her of the immanence of her own death.

Schroeter's treatment of Anita Cerquetti in the final scene of the film also evokes this kind of temporal, allegorical gest. Cerquetti retired at the height of her career at the age of only twenty-nine. After the deaths of her father and her 'mentor' Mario Rossini, it is said "she discovered that she could no longer sing."⁷³ She did, however, produce many recordings of her most famous roles. It is through her recording of the "Casta Diva" aria from Vincenzo Bellini's opera *Norma* that Schroeter brings the present face of the grand old diva into contact with her past. As the camera observes her in a single enormous close-up, her recorded voice reaches out from the past to touch her. Like Maria Callas in Schroeter's earliest 8mm films, Cerquetti is depicted as two separate images: visual and acoustic. But Cerquetti does not simply listen to her acoustic image, this image goes to work upon her body, on her visual image,

and allows that body to make connections with her past. As she listens, her lips faintly mime the words of the aria. Her lips are disengaged from the function of speech and instead become a mimetic organ of listening. Our own listening is mediated through her body, which makes visible the body in her voice, her 'grain'. Cinematically, through the use of the close-up, her pose takes on the appearance of a character about to bring forth a series of recollection-images, but these are never actualized in the visual layer of the film, which remains in the present. Instead, it is the pure sound-image, which represents a kind of past-present captured in an eternal instant by the methods of technological reproduction, and it is this allegorical-image which reaches out to 'touch' the visual image, and issue an invitation to recollect. Cerquetti's visual image fades from the screen, but her sound-image continues to resound until she has taken her very last breath.

Beginning Again, as if for the First Time...

It is thus, with this fleeting, ephemeral yet eternal image, that my exploration into the temporal and gestural aspects of Schroeter's allegorical cinema should come to an end. Indeed, it is largely these fleeting or ephemeral elements—the dislocated fragments, the intervals, the gestures, the postures, repetitions and cultural debris—which are central to Schroeter's cinema. Just as for Benjamin, allegory attempted to take hold of the lost and forgotten fragments of culture and rescue them for all eternity; so, too, Schroeter's allegorical cinema catches us with the gentle but powerful gesture of haptic fascination, touching us, moving us, freeing us from the necessities of narrative and opening us to ever-multiplying, forking and bifurcating times made visible by the allegorical ways of seeing invoked by his films. In doing so, he rescues us from the inexorable process of production and consumption; the 'catastrophe,' as Benjamin said, in which 'things just go on'.⁷⁴

I opened this book with an image of a woman who, it seemed, had lost control of her sensory-motor system. Ironically, in losing her ability to act and react in a conventional way, she, a writer, had lost her ability to bring forth a narrative. Instead, her pen, her breath and her body brought forth fragments, guided not by a process of continuity but by the rhythm of interruption and repetition. Simultaneously, this woman serves as an appropriate emblem for Schroeter's cinematic practice and for the exasperated viewers produced by his exquisite, confounding and richly layered allegorical films. In the writing of this book, I have momentarily overcome my own sensory-motor helplessness in the face of Schroeter's complex cinematic practice to bring forth, not a narrative, but a series of fragments. In the writing of these fragments, I hope to have expressed something of the allegorical nature of Schroeter's cinema, while hopefully not closing off the possibility of future engagement with his work. When the image has faded from the screen and the characters have taken their last breath, Schroeter's allegorical images continue to resonate, setting in motion the task of recollecting; a task that will surely begin again and again as if for the first time.

Notes

1. For a discussion of Brecht's dealings with the film industry in both Germany and the USA see Ben Brewster "Brecht and the Film Industry", *Screen*, v. 16 n. 4 (winter 1975/76), 16-33. Brewster writes of the circumstances surrounding the lawsuit taken out by Brecht and Weill following the film adaptation of *The Threepenny Opera* (G. W. Pabst, 1931), and of Brecht's similarly disappointing experiences in Hollywood. Perhaps the most successfully 'Brechtian' film with which Brecht himself has been involved (as screenwriter) is the Slatan Dudow directed film *Kuhle Wampe* (1932).
2. Thomas Elsaesser, "From anti-illusionism to hyper-realism: Bertolt Brecht and contemporary film", in Pia Kleber & Colin Visser eds., *Re-interpreting Brecht: his influence on contemporary drama and film*, (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 170-171.
3. Elsaesser writes, "In West Germany virtually every director of the so-called New German Cinema makes reference to Brecht, either as a source to be acknowledged or a cultural presence to come to terms with." *Ibid.*, 170-171.
4. For one of Brecht's discussions about the possibility of change in the theatre see, "The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre" in *Brecht on Theatre*, 33-41. In this essay Brecht is well aware of the fact that radical change on a universal level is not possible. Innovations made with the aim to change can be easily absorbed by the social apparatus, as long as those innovations do not threaten to change the social function of a particular social apparatus, which, in the case of theatre, is to entertain. This is in fact what often happens in advertising today which is frequently self-reflexive and has even managed to absorb certain 'Brechtian' strategies such as distanciation. Think of the strategy of seduction through shock employed in various Benetton campaigns in the early 1990s. Alexander Kluge has attempted to answer this tendency to absorption with his strategy of "revolution from below" in which he attempts to get inside the apparatus in order to change it. See Stuart Liebman, "On New German Cinema, Art, Enlightenment, and the Public Sphere: An Interview with Alexander Kluge", *October* n. 46, (1988), 34.
5. Elsaesser, "From anti-illusionism," 176. Although the conditions created through lobbying by his more politically outspoken contemporaries during the late 1960s and early 1970s is in effect what enables Schroeter to produce the kinds of films he does, the fact that he always remained at the very margins of those debates also excludes the possibility of reading this kind of Brechtian influence into Schroeter's work. It is this exclusion that will enable me shortly to begin to read a different aspect of Brecht – one grounded more in his aesthetics and the notion of *Gestus*, which has been relatively neglected and undertheorized by film theory – through Schroeter. In doing so I wish to show that Schroeter achieves through largely aesthetic means, the radical alteration of film-making and its spectatorship that others hoped to achieve through a more cultural-critical and political approach.
6. *Ibid.*, 176. For a detailed discussion of the relevant historical, social and political circumstances (although not explicitly dealing with Brecht) surrounding German feminist film-makers during the 1960s, 70s and 80s, see Julia Knight, *Women and the New German Cinema* (London & New York: Verso, 1992).
7. This represents the most sustained and unified effort by film theorists to date to engage with Brecht's work within a film-theoretical discourse. For that reason (among others), 1970s film theory represents a legacy beyond which I wish to take Brecht in the present chapter.
8. Colin McCabe, "The Politics of Separation", *Screen* v.16 n. 4 (winter 1975/6), 55. McCabe, in this article, equates certain forms of "filmic weakness" with "political weakness".
9. Of course, the appropriation of Brecht into Anglo film theory and screen studies of the 1970s can be seen as part of a much wider social, political and historical context. A context that follows in the wake of the student protests of May 1968. Perhaps the fact that they seem unable to fully import Godard's films – even his most 'Brechtian' ones – into their theories of Brechtian

- cinema is that Godard, although operating within a context contemporary with those of the Screen theorists, seems to have taken a similar but ultimately divergent path: one of the many that arise out of any political or social upheaval.
10. Elsaesser, "From anti-illusionism", 172.
 11. The writers in *Screen* alternate between using the English term 'distanciation' and the rather less adequate term 'alienation'. While the latter term signals the important opposition to identification, it seems to preclude the possibility of pleasure and also does not seem to allow for a relationship between spectator and film to be established, a necessary relationship if a critical attitude is to be adopted by the spectator.
 12. Martin Walsh, "Political Formations in the Cinema of Jean-Marie Straub", in *The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema* (London: BFI Publishing, 1981), 42. My emphasis.
 13. Brecht is quite clear on this point in "A Short Organum for the Theatre", where he explains that it is empathy rather than pleasure as such that a socially conscious theatre must avoid. Brecht believed that such a theatre should aim to educate and entertain. "We need a type of theatre which not only releases the feelings, insights and impulses possible within the particular historical field of human relations in which the action takes place, but employs and encourages those thoughts and feelings which help to transform the field itself." # 35, 190.
 14. Three examples that can be cited are Elizabeth Wright's book *Postmodern Brecht: A Representation* (London & New York: Routledge, 1989) and Pia Kleber & Colin Visser eds. *Re-interpreting Brecht*, of which Thomas Elsaesser's essay "From anti-illusionism to hyper-realism" cited above forms a chapter; Johannes Birringer, "Repetition and Revolution: Theatre Anthropology After Brecht", in his book *Theatre, Theory, Postmodernism* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), and chapter 7 of Rainer Nägele *Theatre, Theory, Speculation: Walter Benjamin and the Scenes of Modernity*, (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), which develops out of a reading of Benjamin's *Origin of German Tragic Drama*.
 15. Benjamin, "What is Epic Theatre", (first version), *Understanding Brecht*, 6.
 16. Walter Benjamin, "What is Epic Theatre" (second version), *Understanding Brecht*, 21.
 17. *Ibid.*, 21.
 18. Benjamin, "The Author as Producer", *Understanding Brecht*, 99.
 19. Benjamin "What is Epic Theatre", (second version), 21.
 20. Benjamin "What is Epic Theatre", (first version), 11.
 21. See Benjamin "Was ist das Epische Theater?" (second version), in Rolf Tiedemann & Hermann Schweppenhäuser eds., *Gesammelte Schriften* II.2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977). Writing on the "quotable gesture," Benjamin says, "Dieser Effekt kann zum Beispiel dadurch erreicht werden, daß auf der Szene der Schauspieler seinen *Gestus* selbst zitiert", 536 (emphasis added). In the English translation of this same passage in *Understanding Brecht*, *Gestus* is substituted with the word "gesture" so that the sentence reads: "This effect can be achieved, for instance, by the actor on stage quoting a gesture of his own." 19. As will become clear in my discussion below, the term *Gestus* cannot simply be conflated with the word "gesture". Benjamin's self-evident use of the term *Gestus* without explanation can perhaps be accounted for by the fact that he considered Brecht's work to coincide very closely with his own project on many levels. Between the two men, the term would have been understood implicitly, and, therefore, its use would, to them, have seemed unproblematic. As will be discussed below, Brecht's own lack of extended explication of the term in his own writing is further evidence of this.
 22. In the English translation of Brecht's writings in *Brecht on Theatre*, (London: Methuen, 1974. second edition), the term *Gestus* and its adjectival form *gestisch* are translated as 'gest' and 'gestic' respectively. I shall henceforth follow this convention.
 23. Bertolt Brecht, "On Gestic Music", in *Brecht on Theatre*, 104-106.

24. Ibid., 104.
25. John Willett, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht*, (London: Eyre Methuen, 1960), 173.
26. Brecht, "On Gestic Music", 104.
27. Brecht, "On Rhymless Verse and Irregular Rhythms", *Brecht on Theatre*, 115. The corresponding German appears in *Gesammelte Werke*, v. 8, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967), 396.
28. Ibid., 116/397. Immediately following this statement in the German original is a passage omitted from the English translation in *Brecht on Theatre*. Brecht writes; "The play [*Edward II*] was an imitation of an Elizabethan play, if you like, a technical study. I concerned myself with showing [*Darstellung*] certain interferences, the unequal development of human destiny, the ebb and flow of historical processes, the 'accidentals' [*Zufälligkeiten*]. The speech had to correspond to these contradictions." "Über reimlose Lyrik", 397. (Translation my own). Although Brecht apologizes for his lack of political knowledge at that time, this desire to show, to make visible the contradictions of the human condition in society through theatre lies at the heart of Epic theatre and the principle of gestic presentation. Brecht 'quotes' Shakespeare; he shows the play rather than simply presenting it. Schroeter could be seen to be developing a similar strategy in his cinema, through the presentation of fragments from theatre, film and opera.
29. Brecht "A Short Organum for the Theatre" in *Brecht on Theatre*, #48, 193, & #49, 194.
30. In thinking about the importance of the gap to Brecht's notion of gest, I am reminded of the voice-over one hears upon exiting a train in the London tube system. "Mind the gap!" proclaims a voice. This is a gesture that does not at first have a social gest, until, that is, one exits the train and is confronted by the sight of any one of the many homeless people who go to beg and seek refuge from the cold in London's subway stations. A banal gest becomes a social one through re-contextualization. One sees the gap, both the physical one between the train and the platform, but also the gap, the division of the classes in British society.
31. Brecht, "On Gestic Music", 104-105.
32. Ibid., 104.
33. *Cinema 2* 192-4.
34. Ibid., 192.
35. Ibid., see 189-196.
36. See, for example, *ibid.*, 215ff.
37. Throughout *Cinema 2*, Deleuze often writes of the way the body functions as the "developer [*révélateur*] of time." The French word, *révélateur*, has a range of connotations. It can mean 'to reveal' in the simple sense of uncovering but can also refer to revelation. Furthermore, as the chosen English translation of "develop" suggests, *révélateur* also refers to the photographic process of developing which involves a combination of light and time in order to make an image visible, thus 'to develop time,' in Deleuze's writings is not so much to show the process of time in a linear manner, but rather to 'reveal' an image of time: hence the "time-image". Brecht's desire to reveal or make visible social processes and mechanisms becomes much more complex in respect to film when read in light of Deleuze's notion of *révélateur*.
38. Deleuze's interest in the relationship between theatre and cinema does not rest in the realm of space as it does for André Bazin. For Bazin, the theatrical space is marked or formed by its architecture, its enclosing frame-like proscenium, while the cinema is characterized by its capacity to represent space as virtually unlimited and extensive, rendering what he calls a "realism" of space that mirrors our perception of space in the world. See André Bazin, "Theatre and Cinema", from *What is Cinema*, reprinted in Gerald Mast & Marshall Cohen eds., *Film Theory and Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, 2nd edition). In contrast, Deleuze is interested in the way the cinema can effect a kind of "theatricalization" upon bodies and images. This "theatricalization", which turns the body itself into a site of performance, as I

shall discuss presently, inflects a temporal dimension upon such bodies and into the images they inhabit and bring forth.

39. *Cinema 2*, 192.
40. Benjamin, "What is Epic Theatre", (second version), 21.
41. *Cinema 2*, 190.
42. *Ibid.*, 189 & 192. This phrase, evocative as it is of death, recalls the allegorical articulation of temporality in the Baroque *Trauerspiel*, which I will discuss shortly in relation to gesture.
43. *Cinema 2*, 194.
44. Barthes, "What is a gesture?" 160. I am not attempting to conflate the notion of gest with gesture in general, but rather with Barthes' much more particular definition of it. Henceforth, I shall use the term gesture in this particular sense.
45. Giorgio Agamben, "Notes on Gesture".
46. Benjamin, "What is Epic Theatre", (first version), 12.
47. Agamben, 138.
48. *Ibid.*, 138.
49. *Ibid.*, 139.
50. *Ibid.*, 139.
51. Elizabeth Wright, "Expropriating Brecht: the dance theatre of Pina Bausch", in *Postmodern Brecht*, 115-121. I will discuss this at length shortly.
52. Melissa McMahon, "'Fourth Person Singular' Becoming Ordinary and the Void in the Critical Body Filmic" in Laleen Jayamanne, ed., *Kiss Me Deadly*, 140.
53. *Ibid.*, 141.
54. Wright, 116.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*, 116.
57. Walter Benjamin, "Studies for a Theory of Epic Theatre", *Understanding Brecht*, 23.
58. McMahon, 141.
59. *Ibid.*, 141.
60. Wright, 116.
61. Bonnie Sue Stein, "Celebrating Hijikata: A Bow to the Butoh Master", *Dance Magazine*, (May 1988), 46.
62. *Ibid.*, 48.
63. Imamura began making films in 1958.
64. Bonnie Sue Stein, "Celebrating Hijikata: A Bow to the Butoh Master", 46.
65. Hijikata quoted by Bonnie Sue Stein in "Twenty Years Ago we were Crazy, Dirty and Mad", *The Drama Review* v. 30, n. 2 (1986), 125.
66. Bonnie Sue Stein, "Celebrating Hijikata: A Bow to the Butoh Master", 46.
67. Prue Moodie, "The Changing Face of Butoh," *Dance Australia*, (April-May 1987), 49. Schroeter recently told me that Ohno still performs, although restricted to a wheelchair. Conversation with Schroeter, Berlin, 14/04/05.
68. The whitened face is a convention that butoh adopts from traditional forms of Japanese theatre and opera. Ohno also frequently performs in western female attire, an adaptation of and comment upon the classical Japanese tradition for men to play female roles in the theatre.
69. In *La répétition générale* Ohno performs to two Puccini arias: 'O mio babbino caro' from *Gianni Schicchi* and 'In quelle trine morbide' from *Manon Lescaut*. In an interview in the film, along with the early twentieth-century Spanish dancer Antonia Merce known as La Argentina or "The Queen of the Castanets" who inspired him to become a dancer when he saw her perform in Tokyo as a young boy, Ohno cites Puccini and the opera singer Maria Callas as two of his most important influences. It is important to note that Schroeter frequently also cites Callas and Puccini as his own influences.

70. Stein, "Celebrating Hijikata", 47.
71. His most recent film *Die Königin* (2000) about the ageing German actress Marianne Hoppe would appear to continue this fascination with the ageing body.
72. André Modeste Grétry, 1741-1813. Grétry is most famous for his development of the *opéra-comique*.
73. Anonymous. "*Poussières d'amour*", press material for the film (New York: IN Pictures, 1996), 6.
74. "Central Park", 50.

Werner Schroeter Filmography

The filmography contains the following information about the films where known: Screenplay (S), Cinematography (C), Editor (E), Producer (P), Principle actors or subjects of a documentary (A), film format and running time.¹

Verona (1967) C & E: Werner Schroeter. 8mm, B&W, 10 min.

Callas Walking Lucia (1968) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. 8mm, B&W 3 min.

Callas Text mit Doppelbeleuchtung (1968) C & E: Werner Schroeter. 8mm, B&W, 5 min.

Maria Callas Porträt (1968) C & E: Werner Schroeter. A: Photos of Callas. 8mm, Colour and B&W, 17 min.

Mona Lisa (1968) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. A: Photos of Maria Callas and a reproduction of the Mona Lisa. 8mm, Colour and B&W, 35 min.

Maria Callas Singt 1957 Rezitativ und Arie der Elvira aus Ernani 1844 von Guiseppe Verdi (1968) C & E: Werner Schroeter, 8mm, B&W, 15 min.

Übungen mit Darstellern (1968) Consists of nine unedited rolls. Camera is attributed to Schroeter for all rolls except rolls 6 and 3. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Werner Schroeter, Steven Adamczewski, Ica Vilander, Carla Aulaulu. All 8mm. Four rolls are colour, five are B&W. Each has a running time of 3 min.

La morte d'Isotta (1968) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. A: Rita & Joachim Bauer, Marlene (Knut) Koch, Werner Schroeter, Truùla Bartok. 8mm, Colour, 50 min.

Himmel Hoch (1968) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. A: Steven Adamczewski, Rita & Joachim Bauer. 8mm, B&W, 12 min.

Paula- 'je reviens' (1968) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. A: Heidi Lorenzo, Suzanne Sheed, Marlene (Knut) Koch, Truùla Bartok, Werner Schroeter. 8mm, Colour, 35 min.

Grotesk-Burlesk-Pittoresk (1968) Co-directed with Rosa von Praunheim. S & C: Werner Schroeter and Rosa von Praunheim. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Rosa von Praunheim. 8mm, Colour & B&W. Duration according to Wim Wenders is 60 min. According to other sources, 40 min.

Faces (1968) S: Werner Schroeter. C: Possibly Rosa von Praunheim. E: Werner Schroeter. A: Heidi Lorenzo, Knut Koch (?). 8mm, B&W, ca. 20 min. This film is reported to be a study for *Aggressionen* (1968).

Aggressionen (1968) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. A: Heidi Lorenzo, Knut Koch (?). 16mm, B&W, 22.5 min.

Neurasia (1968) S: C & E: Werner Schroeter. A: Carla Aulaulu, Magdalena Montezuma, Rita Bauer, Steven Adamczewski. 16mm, B&W, 41 min.

Virginia's Death (1968) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Heidi Lorenzo (?), Carla Aulaulu (?), Steven Adamczewski (?). 16mm, B&W, 9 min. Unreleased.

Argila (1968) S, C, E & P: Werner Schroeter. A: Gisela Trowe, Magdalena Montezuma, Carla Aulaulu, Sigurd Salto. 16mm, made to be shown as a double projection, one roll each of Colour and B&W, 36 min.

Eika Katappa (1969) S, & E: Werner Schroeter. C: Werner Schroeter and Robert van Ackeren for part eight. P: Werner Schroeter. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Gisela Trowe, Carla Aulaulu, Rita & Joachim Bauer, Ingo & Sigurd Salto, Rosa von Praunheim. 16mm Colour and B&W, 144 min.

Nicaragua (1969) S: Werner Schroeter. C: Robert van Ackeren. P: Peter Berling. A: Carla Aulaulu, Magdalena Montezuma, Gavin Campbell. 16mm, B&W, ca. 80 min.

Der Bomberpilot (1970) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. P: Werner Schroeter, ZDF. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Carla Aulaulu, Mascha Elm. 16mm, Colour, 65 min.

Anglia (1970) S: Werner Schroeter. C: Jörg Schmidt-Reichwein. P: Atlantis Film. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Carla Aulaulu, Mascha Elm-Rabben. 16mm, Colour. Unreleased.

Salome (1971) S: Werner Schroeter. C: Robert van Ackeren. E: Ila von Hasperg. P: Ifage, ZDF. A: Mascha Elm Rabben, Magdalena Montezuma, Ellen Umlauf, Thomas von Keyserling. 16mm, Colour, 81 min.

Macbeth (1971) S: Werner Schroeter. C: Horst Thürling. P: Hessischer Rundfunk. A: Annette Tirier, Susi, Stefan von Haugk, Sigurd Salto, Magdalena Montezuma. Video, Colour, 60 min.

Funkausstellung 1971 – Hitparade (1971) TV programme which was never broadcast. According to Anne Even of ZDF no copies survive.

Der Tod der Maria Malibran (*The Death of Maria Malibran*, 1971) S & C: Werner Schroeter. E: Werner Schroeter and Ila von Hasperg. P: Werner Schroeter, ZDF. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Christine Kaufmann, Candy Darling, Manuela Riva, Ingrid Caven. 16mm, Colour, 104 min.

Willow Springs (1972/3) S: & C: Werner Schroeter. E: Werner Schroeter and Ila von Hasperg. P: Werner Schroeter, ZDF. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Christine Kaufmann, Ila von Hasperg, Michael O'Daniels. 16mm, Colour, 78 min.

Der schwarze Engel (*The Black Angel*, 1973/4) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. P: Werner Schroeter, ZDF. A: Ellen Umlauf, Magdalena Montezuma. 16mm, Colour, 71 min.

Johannas Traum (1971-5) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. 16mm, Colour, 30 min. Put together with material from *Der Tod der Maria Malibran*.

Flocons d'or (*Goldflocken, Goldflakes*, 1973–1976) S: Werner Schroeter, Carlos Clarens. C: Werner Schroeter. E: Werner Schroeter, Ila von Hasperg, Cécile Decugis. P: Les Films du Losange. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Bulle Ogier, Andréa Ferrol, Christine Kaufmann, Ellen Umlauf, Ila von Hasperg. 16mm, Colour, 163 min.

Regno di Napoli (*Neapolitanischer Geschwister, Kingdom of Naples*) (1978) S: Werner Schroeter, Wolf Wondraschek. C: Thomas Mauch, E: Werner Schroeter and Ursula West. P: Dieter Geissler, ZDF, P.B.C. A: Romeo Giro, Antonio Orlando, Maria Antonietta Riegel, Cristina Donadio. 35mm, Colour, 130 min.

Palermo oder Wolfsburg (1980) S: Werner Schroeter, Giuseppe Fava. C: Thomas Mauch, E: Werner Schroeter and Ursula West. P: Thomas Mauch Film Production, Artico Film, Eric Franck. A: Nicola Zarbo, Otto Sander, Ida di Benedetto, Magdalena Montezuma, Antonio Orlando. 35mm, Colour, 175 min.

Weisse Reise (1980) S, C & E: Werner Schroeter. P: Eric Franck, Werner Schroeter. A: Harald Vogl, Jim Auwae, Margareth Clémenti. 16mm, Colour, 52 min.

La répétition générale (*Die Generalprobe, Dress Rehearsal*) (1980) S: Werner Schroeter, Colette Godard. C: Franz Weich. E: Catherine Brasier and Jean-Marc Martinez. P: Laura-Film, Thomas Schüli, Munich. ZDF. A: Mostéfa Djadjam, Pina Bausch, Pat Olesko, Reinhild Hofmann, Kazuo Ohno, Sankai Juku, et.al. 16mm, Colour, 90 min.

Das Libeskonzil (*The Council of Love*, 1981) S: Dietrich Kuhlbrodt, Roberto Lerici, Horst Alexander. Based on a play by Oskar Panizza. C: Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein. E: Catherine Brasier and Olivier Morel. P: Saskia Filmproduktion, Trio Film. A: Antonio Salines, Magdalena Montezuma, et al. 35mm, Colour, 96 min.

Tag der Idioten (*Day of Idiots*, 1982), S: Werner Schroeter, Dana Horakova. C: Ivan

Slapeta. E: Catherine Brasier and Moune Barius. P: Oko-Film, Karel Dirka, BR. A: Carole Bouquet, Ida di Benedetto, Ingrid Caven, Christine Kaufmann, Magdalena Montezuma. 35mm, Colour, 107 min.

Der lachende Stern (The Smiling Star, 1983) S: Werner Schroeter. C: Werner Schroeter. E: Werner Schroeter and Christel Orthmann. P: Peter Kern. 16mm, Colour, 110 min.

De l'Argentine (Zum Beispiel Argentina, For Example Argentina, 1983–5) S: Werner Schroeter. C: Werner Schroeter and Carlos Bernardo Wajzman. E: Catherine Brasier and Claudio Martinez. P: Out One FR3/Ministère de la culture. 16mm, Colour, 92 min.

Der Rosenkönig (The Rose King, 1984–6) S: Werner Schroeter. C: Elfi Mikesch, E: Juliane Lorenz. P: Paolo Branco, Udo Heiland Filmproduktion. A: Magdalena Montezuma, Antonio Orlando, Mostéfa Djadjam. 35mm, Colour, 100 min.

A la recherche du soleil. Sur Ariane Mnouchkine (In search of the sun. About Ariane Mnouchkine, 1986/7).

Malina (1990) S: Elfriede Jelinek E: Juliane Lorenz. P: Thomas & Peter Kuchenreuther, Kuchenreuther Film-Produktion. A: Isabelle Huppert, Can Togay, Mathieu Carrière. C: Elfi Mikesch. 35mm, Colour, 120 min.

Poussières d'amour (Abfallprodukte der Liebe, Love's Debris, 1996) S: Werner Schroeter/Claire Alby. C: Elfi Mikesch. E: Juliane Lorenz. P: Christoph Meyer-Weil, Schlemmer Film. A: Anita Cerquetti, Martha Mödl, Rita Gorr, Carole Bouquet, Isabelle Huppert et al. 35mm, Colour, 120 min.

Die Königin: Marianne Hoppe (The Queen, 2000) S: Werner Schroeter/ Monika Klepper. Filmproduktion Bremen. C: Thomas Pleinert/Alexandra Kordes. E: Flo Köhler. P: Elke Peters, MIRA. A: Marianne Hoppe. 35mm, Colour & B&W, 101 min.

Deux (Two, 2002) S: Werner Schroeter/Cédric Anger. C: Elfi Mikesch. E: Julianne Lorenz. P: Paulo Branco, Gemini/Road Movies/France 2. A: Isabelle Huppert, Bulle Ogier, Manuel Blanc, Arielle Dombasle, Annika Kuhl, Robinson Stévenin, Phillippe Reuter, Pascal Bongard, Jean-Francois Stévenin. 35mm, Colour, 121 min.

Note

1. The details of this filmography have been drawn from a variety of sources including: Jansen & Schütte, ed., *Werner Schroeter*, op.cit.; Gerard Courant, ed., *Werner Schroeter*, op.cit.; Scuria & Schmid, eds., *Werner Schroeter Filme 1968–1970*, op.cit.; as well as documentation from various film festivals and Goethe Institut brochures.

Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into three sections. The first contains books on Schroeter's work in both cinema and theatre. The second contains an extensively researched bibliography of articles and book chapters on Schroeter's cinema, as well as interviews and articles by Schroeter. Also included here are several articles relating to his work in theatre. A more extensive bibliography on his work in theatre can be found in Sabine Dhein's book cited below. The third section is a general bibliography of works consulted during the preparation of this book.

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Index

- Achternbusch, Herbert, 34, 46, 72
Akerman, Chantal, 166n60
Adamczewski, Steven, 133, 165n54
Adorno, Theodore, 44, 67, 68, 72, 76, 87n91
Agamben, Giorgio, 139–140, 176–177
Aggressionen, 20
A la recherche du soleil. Sur Ariane Mnouchkine, 29
Ali: Fear Eats the Soul, 26
American Guerilla in the Philippines, 125
Anger, Kenneth, 156, 166n72
Antonioni, Michelangelo, 67, 76, 110, 111n2, 142
Apocalypse Now, 125
Aquino, Benigno, 125
Arafat, Yasser, 174
Argila, 20
Aulaulu, Carla, 62, 81, 129, 133, 144, 145, 146, 150, 165n54
Aumont, Jacques, 117

Bachmann, Ingeborg, 7, 8, 15n4, 28
Baldwin, James, 21
Barthes, Roland, 29, 96, 103–106, 137–139, 176
Baudelaire, Charles, 11, 64, 140, 150–151
Baudry, Jean-Louis, 94
Bauer, Rita, 165n54
Bausch, Pina, 13, 29, 166n60, 177–181, 183

Bazin, André, 190n38
Bellini, Vincenzo, 30, 62, 186
Bellour, Raymond, 8
Belmondo, Jean-Paul, 136–137, 163n7
Benjamin, Walter, 10–14, 15n9, 18, 23, 30, 53, 55–58, 62–65, 73, 74–80, 83n12, 84n19, 85n67, 86n72, 90, 91, 111n14, 113n51, 115, 118–121, 124, 126, 137, 140, 147–148, 150–151, 153, 157, 159, 161, 163n19, 171–172, 175, 176, 179, 182, 187, 189n21
Bergman, Ingmar, 67, 111n2
Bergson, Henri, 14, 16n14, 88n109, 95, 100
Bertolucci, Bernardo, 169
Blow Up, 142
Bogart, Humphrey, 163n7
Bomberpilot, Der, 21–22, 33, 62, 81, 95, 97, 131n40, 146–150, 160, 173
Borges, Jorge Luis, 80–81
Bouquet, Carole, 26, 160
Boyer, Lucien, 62
Brakhage, Stan, 94
Breathless, 136–137
Brecht, Bertolt, 13, 43, 104, 113n45, 147, 150, 169–180, 188n1, 188n4, 188n5, 188n9, 189n13, 190n28
Bresson, Robert, 78
Brooks, Jodi, 75, 88n101, 105–106, 163n19
Brooks, Louise, 133
Brutalität in Stein, 86n69

- Buci-Glucksmann, Christine, 140–141, 149
 Buck-Morss, Susan, 15n10
 Buñuel, Luis, 67, 165n46
 Burch, Noël, 96
 Burrows, William S, 21
- Callas, Maria, 20, 21, 29, 61–62, 141–143, 145, 146, 164n37, 186
Callas Walking Lucia, 20, 141, 164n31
Callas Text mit Doppelbeleuchtung, 164n31
 Cassavetes, John, 163n19, 175
 Caven, Ingrid, 165n54
 Ceddo, 87n77
 Cerquetti, Anita, 30, 185, 186–187
 Chaplin, Geraldine, 74
Char Adhyay, 86n77
 Charney, Leo, 121
 Chen, Kaige, 87n78
 Cherubini, Luigi, 142
Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach, 32
Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover, The, 73
 Coppola, Francis Ford, 125
 Corrigan, Timothy, 18, 70, 106, 113n53, 124, 127–129, 161
 Courant, Gérard, 45
Cria Cuervos, 74–75
- Da Vinci, Leonardo, 141, 142
De l'Argentine, 29, 121
 Deleuze, Gilles, 11–14, 15n1, 45, 51n83, 53–55, 65, 67–71, 74–79, 81, 85n67, 86n69, 88n109, 89–90, 95, 100–101, 106, 108, 110, 111n2, 116–120, 123, 127–129, 135, 138, 144, 149–150, 163n19, 165n42, 171, 174–177, 178, 190n37, 190n38
Deux, 21, 28–29, 54–55, 58–64, 68, 76, 80–83, 89, 95, 98, 117, 121, 124, 128, 130, 140, 173–174
 Diderot, Denis, 104
 Dixon, Laurinda, 160–161
- Djadjam, Mostèfa, 27, 122, 157, 162, 180
 D'Lugo, Marvin, 74
 Dombasle, Arielle, 61
 Donizetti, Gaetano, 20, 141, 142
 Dors, Diana, 84n23
Draftsman's Contract, The, 73
 Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 21, 62, 84n27
 Dudow, Slatan, 188n1
 Duncan, Robert, 156
 Dyer, Richard, 156–157
- Eika Katappa*, 19, 20, 21, 28, 31, 35, 59, 62, 97–101, 120, 129, 135–136, 137, 143–145, 148, 150, 154, 155–156
 Eisenstein, Sergei, 12, 104, 116–119
 Eisner, Lotte, 46–47
 Elliot, Bridget, 73
 Elm, Mascha, 146, 165n54
 Elsaesser, Thomas, 17, 30–34, 38–44, 46–47, 91, 96, 169, 170
 Ensslin, Christiane, 174
 Ensslin, Gudrun, 174
- Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 17, 18, 26, 30, 33–34, 39, 41–44, 72, 112n42, 165n54
 Feldmann, Sebastian, 20–21, 45, 98, 141–142
 Fellini, Federico, 67
Fireworks, 156
 Fletcher, Angus, 67, 72
Flocons d'or, 21, 28, 96, 121
 Foucault, Michel, 29, 45, 77, 78
 Franck, Eric, 31–32
 Freud, Sigmund, 164n40
- Gabin, Jean, 133
 Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 166n66
 Gaudreault, André, 112n35
 Godard, Jean-Luc, 94, 111n2, 130n22, 136–137, 169, 170, 188n9
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 86n72
 Goffman, Erving, 113n56
 Gorr, Rita, 30

- Greenaway, Peter, 73
 Grétry, André Modeste, 185
 Griffith, D. W., 116
Grotesk-Burlesk-Pittoresk, 19
 Gunning, Tom, 66, 94–96, 107, 112n27, 112n35, 131n27

 Hansen, Miriam, 57, 66
 Hasperg, Ila von, 128
 Hauff, Reinhard, 44
 Heath, Stephen, 93–94, 96, 127–128, 137, 170
 Herzog, Werner, 17, 18, 34, 40, 43, 46, 51n61, 72, 85n58
High Noon, 66
 Hijikata, Tatsumi, 182–183
 Hoffmann, E. T. A., 144
 Hölderlin, Friedrich, 21
 Hoppe, Marianne, 30
 Horkheimer, Max, 44
 Huillet, Danièle, 86n69, 94, 169
 Huppert, Isabelle, 7–8, 15n1, 28, 29, 54–55, 58, 61–62, 68, 80–82, 98, 124, 128, 160, 161, 165n54

 Indiana, Gary, 90
Invasion of the Body Snatchers, 66

Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai de Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles, 166n60
 Jelenik, Elfriede, 28
 Jeny, Urs, 45
Je t'aime je t'aime, 127
 Johnston, Sheila, 34–36

 Kaes, Anton, 70–71
 Kafka, Franz, 91, 163n19
Kasba, 86n77
The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser, 51n61
 Kaufmann, Christine, 128
 Kazan, Elia, 66
 Kleiser, Paul B., 45, 131n40
 Kluge, Alexander, 12, 37, 40–43, 65–66, 68, 72, 78, 85n58, 86n69, 118–120, 131n27, 188n4
 Koch, Knut, 54

Königin, Die, 30, 32, 121
 Konnersreuth, Therese von, 154
 Kostenbaum, Wayne, 142
 Kouvaros, George, 14
 Kracauer, Siegfried, 47, 87n91
 Kristeva, Julia, 138
Kuhle Wampe, 188n1
 Kuzinar, Alice, 73

Lachende Stern, Der, 29, 121, 125–127, 145, 166n69, 173
L'age D'or, 165n46
 Lang, Fritz, 66, 100, 125
 Lautréamont, 21, 58, 59
 Liebman, Stuart, 119
 Liszt, Franz, 21, 143
 Loach, Kenneth, 50n59
 Lorenz, Juliane, 84n20
Lost Honour of Katharina Blum, The, 27
 Lumière Brothers, 139

Macbeth, 23
Machorka-Muff, 86n69
 Malibran, Maria, 21, 143, 145, 175
Malina, 7–8, 15, 21, 28, 49n33, 62, 63, 95, 160, 161
Man With a Movie Camera, 94
 Marcos, Ferdinand, 125, 127, 146
 Marcos, Imelda, 121, 125, 127, 131n32, 145–146, 165n47
 Marey, Etienne Jules, 139
Maria Callas Porträt, 164n31
Marianne and Julianne, 27
Marriage of Maria Braun, The, 112n42
Matrosen dieser Welt, Die, 31–32
 McCabe, Colin, 170
 McMahon, Melissa, 177, 179
Medea, 142
 Metz, Christian, 89
 Mitscherlich, Margarette & Thomas, 22
 Mnouchkine, Ariane, 29
 Mödl, Martha, 30, 185–186
Mona Lisa, 141
 Montezuma, Magdalena, 21, 23, 27, 48n12, 61–62, 81, 100, 128, 133, 143, 145, 146, 150, 154, 165n54

Moodie, Prue, 182, 183

Mooladdé, 87n77

Morgan, Michèle, 133

Mulvey, Laura, 77, 94

Naremore, James, 113n56

Neurasia, 20, 97, 98, 110, 133

Nibelungen, Die, 100

Nichols, Bill, 90

Nicht versöhnt, 86n69

Not the Homosexual is perverse but the Situation in which He Finds Himself, 73

Nube, La, 86n77

Offenbach, Jacques, 62

Ogier, Bulle, 28, 54–55, 58, 60, 130

Ohno, Kazuo, 13, 29, 164n27, 177, 182–185, 191n68, 191n69

Olesko, Pat, 29, 122, 123

On the Waterfront, 66

Orlando, Antonio, 27, 157

Ottinger, Ulrike, 34, 72, 85n58, 86n71

Ozu, Yasujiro, 48n13

Pabst, G. W., 188n1

Palermo oder Wolfsburg, 18, 24–26, 32, 59, 64, 80, 95, 102–110, 124, 155, 165n54, 166n69, 173, 175

Pasolini, Pier Paolo, 26, 111n2, 142, 159–160, 164n28, 165n46

Patriotin, Die, 130n18, 130n19

Pearson, Roberta, 137, 139

Peitz, Christiane, 45

Pickpocket, 78

Pluta, Ekkehard, 9, 45

Pope John Paul II, 84n20

Poussières d'amour, 21, 29–30, 62, 121, 143, 163n14, 164n27, 164n37, 185–187

Praunheim, Rosa von, 19, 72, 73, 156, 165n54

Presley, Elvis, 125

Proust, Marcel, 12, 64, 129, 137

Puccini, Giacomo, 99, 143, 183, 184, 191n69

Purdy, Anthony, 73

Red Sorghum, 87n78

Regan, Ronald, 125

Regno di Napoli, 23–26, 46, 64, 80, 92–93, 96, 97, 106–107, 151–155, 165n54, 166n69, 173

Rentschler, Eric, 86n69

Répétition générale, La, 13, 29, 121–123, 125, 177, 179, 182–185, 191n69

Resnais, Alain, 67, 101, 111n2, 127

Rezitativ und Arie der Elvira aus Ernani 1844 von Guiseppe Verdi, 164n31

Rio das Mortes, 41–42, 44

Robbe-Grillet, Alain, 101

Rohdie, Sam, 159–160

Rosenkönig, Der, 21, 27–28, 59, 155, 156–160

Ruiz, Raul, 63–64, 72–73, 75, 84n29

Sacks, Oliver, 139

Sade, Marquis de, 165n46

Saless, Sohrab Shahid, 26

Salo, 165n46

Salome, 23

Sander, Helke, 85n58

Sanders-Brahms, Helma, 26, 72, 85n58

Saura, Carlos, 74

Schamoni, Peter, 86n69

Schlöndorff, Volker, 17, 18, 27, 72, 85n58

Schmid, Daniel, 85n58

Schmid, Eva M. J., 45

Schopenhauer, Arthur, 72, 86n72

Schuhmann, Robert, 21, 143

Schütte, Wolfram, 45

Scuria, Frank, 45

Seberg, Jean, 163n7

Sembene, Ousmane, 87n77

Shahani, Kumar, 86n77

Shakespeare, William, 23, 145

Shirin's Wedding, 26

- Shyamalan, M. Night, 132n45
 Sica, Vittorio De, 67
 Siegel, Don, 66
 Sieglohr, Ulrike, 22, 161
Silences of the Palace, 87n77
Sisters of the Revolution, 19
Sixth Sense, The, 132n45
Slow Motion, 130n22
 Smith, Jack, 166n72
 Snow, Michael, 94, 141
 Sobchack, Vivian, 8
 Solanas, Fernando, 86n77
 Sontag, Susan, 106, 113n53, 178
Stand der Dinge, Der, 72
 Stein, Bonnie Sue, 182, 183
 Stein, Eckhart, 36–37
 Stendhal, 82
 Stern, Lesley, 14
 Straub, Jean Marie, 32, 86n69, 94, 169
 Supervia, Conchita, 54–55, 83n3, 143
Sur, 86n77
 Syberberg, Hans-Jürgen, 46, 85n58

Tag der Idioten, 26–27, 95, 160–162, 180–182
 Tagore, Rabindranath, 86n77
 Tarr, Béla, 86n77
 Thomas, Ambroise, 54, 145
Threepenny Opera, The, 188n1
 Tlatli, Moufida, 87n77
Tod der Maria Malibran, Der, 20, 21, 28, 45, 121, 128, 143
 Tourette, Gilles de la, 139
Tout va bien, 170
 Trier, Lars von, 50n59

 Trotta, Margarethe von, 27, 72
 Trowe, Gisela, 97, 144, 165n54

 Umlauf, Ellen, 165n54

 Valente, Catarina, 21, 142, 144
Vampyr, 62
 Varda, Agnès, 111n2
 Verdi, Giuseppe, 81, 142, 144
 Vertov, Dziga, 94
Virginia's Death, 162n2
 Visconti, Luchino, 169

 Wagner, Richard, 10, 100
 Walsh, Martin, 170
Wavelength, 141
Weißer Reise, 31–32
 Welles, Orson, 101, 111n2
 Wenders, Wim, 17, 18, 34, 46, 70, 72, 85n58
Werkmeister Harmonies, 87n77
 Wiegand, Wilfried, 45, 133–134
 Wilde, Oscar, 23, 158
Willow Springs, 128, 160
 Witte, Karsten, 27, 37, 45, 146–147, 149
 Wright, Elizabeth, 177, 178–180

Xala, 87n77

Yellow Earth, 87n78
Yield to the Night, 84n23

 Zhang Yimou, 87n78
 Zinneman, Fred, 66

